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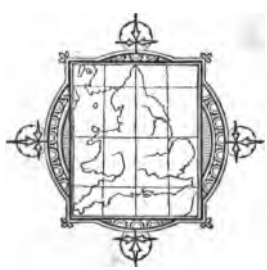
HISTORICAL READERS

BOOK II.

ENGLAND TO 1327 A.D.



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PREFACE.

THIS is the Second of a series of Readers in English History, of which the First consists of Stories from the History of England, and the other three form a continuous history of the country from the beginning to the present time.

The aim of the series is twofold—to supply a firm and accurate basis of instruction in the facts of English History, and to enlist the sympathies of children, by presenting to them, in a readable and interesting way, the great men and events that have made our country what it is.

At the same time the more practical needs of the teacher have not been neglected. In this Book, spelling columns have been appended to each lesson, with notes and explanations of words where necessary. All the Books have been carefully graduated to suit the progress of the pupil.

The following are the Books of the series:

I. STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.
II. ENGLAND TO 1327 A.D.
III. ENGLAND FROM 1327 TO THE REVOLUTION OF 1688 A.D.
IV. ENGLAND FROM THE REVOLUTION TO 1882.

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(The titles of poetical lessons are in *Italics.*)

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CHAMBERS'S HISTORICAL READERS.

BOOK II.

ENGLAND TO 1327 A.D.

BRITISH PERIOD.

LESSON I.

Introduction—The Ancient Britons.

1. ENGLISHMEN are proud nowadays of saying, that our empire is the greatest the world has ever seen; that the sun is always shining upon some part of it—upon England or New Zealand, upon Canada or South Africa, upon India or Australia. But we are going to hear about a time long, long ago, when things were very different indeed.

2. At that time—nearly two thousand years since—Britain consisted only of this one island in which we live. No splendid high-roads were then to be seen, with carts and carriages passing to and fro; no railroads, with trains flying along every hour of

the day and night; no fine harbours, with gallant merchant-ships lying at anchor, unlading or taking in their cargoes; no large towns or pretty villages, such as we see now wherever we go; no beautiful fields and gardens, with their rich displays of fruits and flowers.

3. Then, the country was nearly covered with forests, in which roamed the wolf and the wild boar. The people who lived in it were the ancient Britons, from whom the Welsh are descended. They were in a half-savage state, especially in the northern part of the island, in what is now the north of England, and Scotland. Further south, opposite the shores of France (then called Gaul), they were rather more civilised.

4. The ancient Britons were a tall and strong people, with blue eyes and fair hair, which they allowed to grow very long. In the south they wore gay clothes of their own weaving, and decked themselves with chains of gold. But in the middle and northern parts of the country, their clothing consisted only of the skins of wild beasts, roughly dressed. They used to stain their bodies blue with a plant called *woad;* and in the fury of battle, would throw aside their garments, and exhibit their naked bodies marked with strange figures, in order to terrify their foes.

5. Their dwellings were in the middle of large woods, where, having felled the trees, and cleared the ground, they made themselves slight huts, which they covered with boughs of trees, turf, or skins. Here also they had folds for their cattle.

The approaches to their dwellings were defended by the trees which they had cut down being thrown across each other, and by ramparts of earth. These were all the towns they had, except on the coasts, where they had learned to build somewhat better houses from the merchants who used to visit the island to buy tin.

6. In the south, too, the Britons grew a great deal of corn, which they ground with querns. They had large herds of cattle, which yielded them plenty of milk and flesh. But in the northern parts they lived chiefly on the flesh of wild animals. In times of need, it is said the poorer class had to live upon the bark and roots of trees.

A Quern.

7. The Britons were a very brave people, and had some skill in war. They had both foot-soldiers and horse-soldiers. They had, besides, many war-chariots, with which they drove among the ranks of the enemy with great effect. Fastened to the wheels on each side were sharp scythes, which cut the limbs of those who came in the way. The Britons were wonderfully skilful in the management of their chariots, driving them rapidly down the steep hill-sides, running along the pole and back again into the chariot, or leaping on the ground to fight on foot.

8. The Britons had no king or queen to reign over the whole country, as we have now, but were divided into many different tribes. Each tribe had its own chief, or petty king, and lived in its own district. Very often those tribes were at war with each other, striving which could obtain the mastery. Yet we shall see that when a foreign enemy invaded their country, they defended it with great valour, and performed many deeds of heroism.

Zea'-land	**es-pe'-cial-ly**	**mer'-chants**	**skil'-ful**
Can'-a-da	**op'-pos-ite**	**yield'-ed**	**man'-age-ment**
Aus-tra'-li-a	**ex-hib'-it**	**sol'-diers**	**for'-eign**
an'-chor	**fig'-ures**	**scythes**	**val'-our**

har'-bours, ports for ships.
car'-goes, loads carried by ships.
roamed, wandered.
woad, a plant, from the leaves of which a blue dye was made.
ap-proach'-es, ways leading to.
ram'-parts, mounds thrown up to defend a place.
char'-i-ots, a kind of car used in war.
her'-o-ism, bravery.

Civ'-il-ised.—People are civilised when they know how to plough and sow the land, to make good roads and nice clothes, and to build comfortable houses.

Quern, a handmill for grinding corn, still used in some countries. It consisted of two stones, the upper of which fitted into a hollow in the lower one. The upper stone was moved with a handle round the lower one, the corn being ground between them.

LESSON II.

The Druids.

1. The Britons had no knowledge of the true God, but worshipped many gods. Their priests were called Druids (from a word meaning an *oak*), the chief one being named the arch-Druid. Besides the Druids, there was a lower order of priests called

bards, whose duty it was to compose songs, and sing them to the harp, in praise of their heroes and great men: whence poets, even now, are sometimes called bards.

2. The Druids were the leaders of the people, who feared them so much, that they never engaged in any undertaking either of peace or war without first seeking their advice. If any one had the misfortune to offend them, he was doomed to a life of misery. He was not allowed to be present at the great sacrifices, or at the sacred rite of cutting the mistletoe. His friends were forbidden to speak to him, or to have any dealings with him. He was condemned to wander forth alone, shunned by all his fellows. Like Ishmael of old, 'his hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against him.'

3. Besides being the guides, the Druids were also the teachers of the people. They alone possessed any learning at that time. They are said to have had a considerable knowledge of the stars, as well as several other branches of study. So great was the respect in which they were held, that the chief men among the Britons were eager to have their sons brought up under their care. Their pupils frequently stayed with them till they grew up to be young men, and were carefully instructed by them. They were not permitted to *write* anything, however; everything was committed to memory, so that their learning might remain a secret.

4. It was the duty of the Druids, also, to offer up the sacrifices to the gods. When war, or famine, or

plague threatened the land, it was the cruel custom to offer up *human beings*. This was very dreadful, but the way in which it was done made it more dreadful still. The victims were put into large image-shaped cages of wicker-work, and then burned. The persons who were condemned to die in this manner were

Stonehenge.

generally such as had been found guilty of theft or robbery, or some other crime; and sometimes they were prisoners who had been taken in war.

5. Here and there can be seen to this day circles of huge stones, which were long thought to have been the remains of the rude temples where the Druids performed these awful rites; but it is now considered more likely that they were famous burial-places, and that the huge stones were erected as

monuments to the departed dead. Learned men, however, can only conjecture why they were placed there, and the real truth about them will perhaps never be known. The most famous of these remains are the ruins of Stonehenge, on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire.

6. The Druids had their dwellings chiefly among groves of oak trees. The mistletoe, which is sometimes found growing upon the oak, they worshipped as a sacred plant sent by the gods. Searching for the mistletoe at certain seasons was one of their most striking customs. Priests and people all joined in the search, and when the plant was found, one of the Druids, clothed in white robes, ascended the tree, and cut off the branch with a golden knife. Other priests stood beneath, holding a white towel to receive it as it fell. Two white bulls were next slain and offered up as a sacrifice. The plant was then distributed among the crowd of worshippers, and happy was the man who received a portion, for he then fancied that he possessed a charm which would save him from danger and disease.

know'-ledge	**fre'-quent-ly**	**guilt'-y**	**a-scend'-ed**
com-pose'	**com-mit'-ted**	**re-mains'**	**tow'-el**
un-der-tak'-ing	**se'-cret**	**mon'-u-ments**	**re-ceive'**
mis'-tle-toe	**fam'-ine**	**Stone-henge'**	**dis-trib'-u-ted**
con-demned'	**plague**	**Salis'-bur-y**	**pos-sessed'**
pu'-pils	**threat'-ened**	**search'-ing**	**dis-ease'**

wor'-shipped, served as gods.
he'-roes, brave and great men.
sac'-ri-fi-ces, things offered to the gods.
rite, act of worship.
vic'-tims, living things offered to the gods.
wick'-er-work, basket-work.
e-rect'-ed, set up.
con-jec'-ture, guess.

ROMAN PERIOD.

FROM 55 B.C. TO 410 A.D.

LESSON III.

Julius Cæsar's Invasions.

1. At the time of which we have been speaking, the Roman empire was the greatest in the world. The city of Rome was then, as it still is, the chief city of the southern country called Italy. The Romans were a very clever and civilised people. Their generals and soldiers were the bravest and most skilful in the world, and had conquered nearly all the surrounding nations.

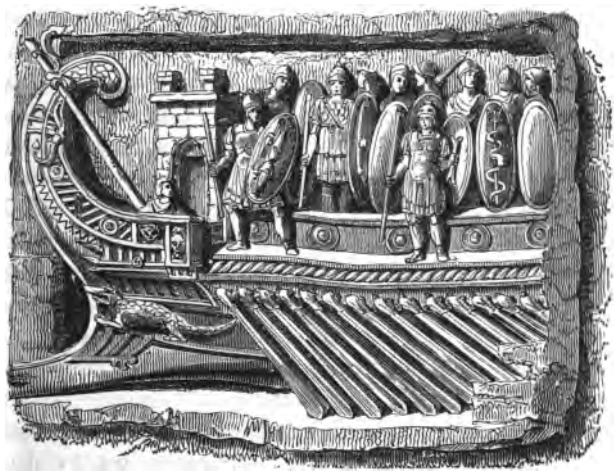
Roman Standard.

2. The greatest and most famous of all their generals was Julius Cæsar. Julius was a great writer as well as a great fighter; and he has written a book, in which he has given the history of his own wars. It is from this book that we learn almost everything we know about the ancient Britons and the wars he carried on against them.

3. He had conquered France (at that time called Gaul); and he now resolved to invade Britain, and to add it to his conquests. He accordingly picked

out from his army about twelve thousand of his bravest soldiers, and before daybreak on an autumn morning, set sail for Britain. As the morning began to dawn, they saw before them the white cliffs of Kent swarming with armed men, waiting to receive them. They sailed farther

55 B.C.



Roman Galley.—From an Ancient Sculpture.

along the coast till they came to a suitable landing-place, but the Britons were there before them.

4. The Romans felt now that their trip across the Channel was to be no holiday excursion, but that one of the hardest tasks they had ever had to perform lay before them. However, they were brave men. They had never turned their backs to an enemy before, and they were not going to do so now.

Accordingly, Cæsar gave the order to run the galleys ashore, where the Britons were galloping backwards and forwards, brandishing their weapons, and even going into the water and daring the Romans to land.

5. The trumpets sounded. But, for a minute, not a man stirred. At last, the standard-bearer of Cæsar's favourite legion, the tenth, jumped into the sea, calling upon his comrades to follow him, if they did not wish to see their standard (the Roman eagle) taken. This was enough to rouse them. With a loud shout they all sprang ashore, and rushed upon the Britons.

6. The Britons fought bravely, but, with their half-naked bodies and clumsy weapons, they were no match for their well-trained foes, who were clad in the strongest armour. They were driven back; and, when evening came, the Romans encamped upon the shore. And we can fancy, as they sat in groups around their watch-fires that night, perhaps expecting a sudden attack from the Britons, that they were not in such a merry frame of mind as they had been on the evening before; for around them could be seen lying the dead bodies of many of their companions, who would never more return with them in triumph to Rome.

7. The Romans now saw that it would be impossible to conquer the country that year. So, after remaining for about twenty days, during which time they repulsed a bold attack made by the Britons upon their camp, they embarked in the dead of night, and returned to Gaul once more.

8. Cæsar was not the man, however, to give up readily what he had once set his heart upon. Accordingly, the following summer he collected an army three times as large as the former one, and embarked it in a fleet of eight hundred vessels. Sailing across the Straits of Dover, they reached the shore of Britain the following day at noon. No enemy was there to oppose their landing, yet the Romans were not destined to achieve an easy triumph. 54 B.C.

9. The various tribes of Britons had joined their forces, and chosen as leader, a brave chieftain, whose name was Cassibelan; or, as the Romans called him, Cassivellaunus. For about three months this brave chief strove in every possible way to check the advance of the Romans into his country. He thus earned for himself a name that will never die so long as we delight to hear of brave deeds. But all that the Britons could do was in vain. Cæsar forced a passage across the river Thames, took their camp by storm, and captured all the stores and cattle.

10. Many of the chiefs now came to the Roman camp, and submitted to Cæsar as their conqueror. Cassibelan, however, held out some time longer, hoping that the Kentish tribes would be able to destroy the Roman camp and fleet. This, however, they failed to do; and even he at last was forced to yield. Cæsar was now anxious to return to Gaul. He therefore called the British chiefs together, and fixed a certain sum of money, called *tribute*, which they would have to collect, and send to Rome yearly. To make sure of their paying

this tribute, he took certain of their leading men with him as *hostages;* and as soon as his fleet could be got ready, sailed away once more for Gaul.

Ju'-li-us	**ex-cur'-sion**	**com'-rades**	**chief'-tain**
Cæ'-sar	**gal'-lop-ing**	**ar'-mour**	**Cas'-si-bel-an**
in-va'-sions	**wea'-pons**	**col-lect'-ed**	**Cas-si-vel-laun'-us**
con'-quered	**stand'-ard-bear-er**	**op-pose'**	**con'-quer-or**
au'-tumn	**fa'-vour-ite**	**des'-tined**	**an'-xious**

gal'-leys, a kind of ships moved by oars.
brand'-ish-ing, waving about.
a-chieve', win, accomplish.
cap'-tured, took.
sub-mit'-ted, gave in.
hos'-ta-ges, persons given up in pledge.

Letters SPQR on the Roman standard. These are the first letters of the Roman words meaning Senate and People of Rome.
Le'-gion, a large regiment of about six thousand Roman soldiers.

LESSON IV.

Claudius and Caractacus—a Roman Emperor and a British Hero, 43–51 A.D.

1. The Britons were left in peace by the Romans for nearly a century after the departure of Julius Cæsar. At length, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, it was once more resolved to attempt the conquest of the island. Distinguished generals, with numerous armies, were sent across to carry on the war. The emperor himself came over to Britain for a short time. The Britons had lost nothing of the warlike spirit of their forefathers, who had fought against Julius Cæsar nearly a hundred years before. They defended their country with the utmost bravery on many a hard-fought field; and

43 A.D.

the Romans took several years to conquer even the southern portion of the island.

2. The chieftain who gave them most trouble was Caractacus, king of the Silures in South Wales, the bravest of all the British tribes. This chief, who was a brave and noble-minded man, and who had for years struggled against the Roman advance, gathered round him all those Britons who preferred death to becoming the subjects of the Romans.

A Roman General.

3. Caractacus and his band of heroes defended every inch of their fatherland with the utmost bravery. At last, however, after many of his bravest soldiers had been slain, he was forced to retreat northwards, and he made his last stand on a hill in Shropshire. Here he was

50 A.D. completely defeated. His wife and children and brothers were captives in the hands of the Romans, and a price was set upon his own head. He fled for safety to his step-mother,

who was queen of a tribe in the north of Britain. But she basely betrayed him into the hands of his enemies for a sum of money.

4. Along with many other prisoners, he was conveyed to Rome. On their arrival, they were paraded through the streets in chains, as a gazing-stock for the multitude, before suffering death. The proud spirit of Caractacus did not droop under this treatment; and when he was led before the Emperor Claudius and his courtiers, they were struck with his kingly bearing and undismayed appearance. He seemed like 'a lion taken in the toils.'

5. Placed before Claudius, he addressed him to this effect: 'I have fought for years to protect my native land from strangers, and to dwell in my humble home in peace. This day I have beheld the beauty and splendour of your city, and I am amazed to think how a people possessing such grandeur at home, can envy me a cottage of wood and turf in far-off Britain.' The emperor was so much struck by the noble appearance of his captive, and by his touching speech, that he restored both him and his family to freedom, and they passed the rest of their days in peace.

Claud'-i-us	**com-plete'-ly**	**gaz'-ing-stock**	**splen'-dour**
Car-ac'-ta-cus	**pris'-on-ers**	**mul'-ti-tude**	**a-mazed'**
de-par'-ture	**con-veyed'**	**un-dis-mayed'**	**gran'-deur**
Sil'-ū-res	**ar-ri'-val**	**ad-dressed'**	**ap-pear'-ance**

cen'-tu-ry, a hundred years.
dis-tin'-guished, famous.
pre-ferred', chose as being better.
fa'-ther-land, land of one's fathers; native land.
be-trayed', gave up wickedly or treacherously.
par-ad'-ed, made a show of.
toils, snares, nets.
en'-vy, grudge.
Cour'-tiers, persons at a king's court; the great people about a king.

LESSON V.

The Sack of Mona (Anglesey), 61 A.D.

1. The conquest of Britain had hitherto made very slow progress. So, in the reign of the Emperor **Nero,** one of the ablest generals they had was sent by the Romans to take the chief command. His name was **Suetonius Paulinus.** He was a very stern man, and had quite made up his mind to put down the Britons, and to bring them under the Roman sway.

2. He inquired how it was that they fought with so much bravery, and refused to yield. He learned that they were encouraged by the Druids, and the bards, the latter of whom used to chant warlike strains to fire the spirits of the soldiers. Suetonius had no sooner found this out than a very cruel thought came into his mind. He determined to put the Druids and bards to death.

3. The chief abode of the Druids at that time was the Isle of Mona, which, as we know, is separated from Wales by a very narrow strait. On this sacred isle were numerous groves of trees studded with rude open-air temples. Here, in happier times the Druids had spent their time in teaching their pupils, and the bards had tuned their harps to happy strains of music.

4. Now, since an enemy was overspreading the land, all this was changed. The old Druids looked thoughtful and grave; studies were forsaken and

pupils forgotten, and the harps of the bards were silent, or only gave forth sounds of sadness and despair.

5. The island of Mona had now become the refuge also of those Druids who had fled from the parts of the country which the Romans had conquered. Suetonius accordingly determined at one stroke to put an end to their power by **the Sack of Mona.** With a large army he passed the narrow channel which separates the isle from the mainland, the infantry crossing in flat-bottomed boats, while the cavalry swam across.

6. On the shore stood an army of Britons. Women clothed in black garments, their hair streaming in the wind, rushed to and fro among them, carrying torches in their hands. Round about stood the Druids, with their hands stretched to heaven, and calling down terrible curses on the invaders.

7. The Roman soldiers had not been used to such sights as this, and for a short time they stood rooted to the spot with fear. It was not for long, however. At the voice of their commander they advanced, and soon defeated the Britons, slaying them without mercy, and throwing them into the fires they had prepared for the Roman prisoners. The groves in which they carried on their cruel rites were cut down. And thus a terrible blow was given to the power of the Druids. Suetonius doubtless smiled grimly as he looked upon the scene of destruction; but, even in the very moment of his cruel triumph, messengers came in haste, with the evil tidings that a mighty rising

against the Romans had taken place in the east of Britain.

pro'-gress	**en-cour'-aged**	**stud'-ded**	**doubt'-less**
Su-e-to'-ni-us	**strains**	**stretched**	**de-struc'-tion**
Paul-i'-nus	**de-ter'-mined**	**ter'-ri-ble**	**tri'-umph**
in-quired'	**sep'-ar-at-ed**	**rites**	**Bri'-tain**

sack, burning or destruction by an army.
chan'-nel, a strait or narrow sea.
In'-fan-try, foot-soldiers.
cav'-al-ry, horse-soldiers.
torch'-es, blazing lights carried in the hand.
grove, a little wood or cluster of trees.
grim'-ly, sternly.

LESSON VI.

Boadicea—a British Heroine, 61 A.D.

1. Boadicea, the queen of the Iceni, a tribe in the east of Britain, had been treated, along with her two

daughters, in a very shameful manner, by the orders of the Roman officer who had been left in charge during the absence of Suetonius. Stung to fury by the treatment she had received, she went about amongst her countrymen, and called upon them to rise in arms, and drive the hated Romans out of the country. She appeared before her people, clad in a rich plaid and mantle, with a golden collar round her neck, a spear in her hand, her yellow hair floating in the breeze—'every inch a queen.'

2. As her subjects listened to her tale of wrong, their blood boiled within them, and they shouted to be led against the enemy. Day after day their numbers increased. Other tribes joined, and they came on, gathering force on their way, against the colonies where the Romans lived. One Roman legion attempted to stop their march, but was entirely cut to pieces. Several strongholds of the Romans were destroyed, and the inhabitants put to death. London was taken, and it seemed indeed as if the Romans were going to be swept clean out of the country.

3. But Suetonius and his army were coming swiftly up. The Britons had doubtless heard of the sack of Mona. This increased their hatred of him, and they marched to meet him, confident that their numbers —which were said to amount to one hundred thousand—would enable them to gain the victory. They found him with his army (small in number compared with theirs) drawn up on the slope of a hill, with woods on each side and behind. Over and over again the Britons rushed to the charge, thinking to sweep away the enemy by the force and weight of numbers.

4. But the Romans stood firm as a rock, dashing back every charge that was made against them. For some time this went on, till Suetonius, seeing the Britons in confusion, ordered his men to charge down the hill upon them. On they came like an avalanche. The Britons broke and fled in all directions. They were pursued and slaughtered by the Roman soldiers, who had been told by their stern leader to spare none. The ill-fated Boadicea, who had expected a victory, was broken-hearted at the defeat of her soldiers, and in her misery poisoned herself. **61 A.D.**

Bo-a-di-ce'-a	**ab'-sence**	**strong'-holds**	**com-pared'**
her'-o-ine	**col'-lar**	**in-hab'-i-tants**	**con-fu'-sion**
I-ce'-ni	**in-creased'**	**vic'-to-ry**	**slaugh'-tered**

plaid, a loose outer covering wrapped round the body.
man'-tle, a kind of cloak.
col'-on-ies, settlements made in a foreign country.
strong'-holds, strong places, fortified places.
av'-al-anche, a huge mass of snow or ice that rolls down a mountain side.

LESSON VII.

Boadicea.

When the British warrior-queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage, beneath a spreading oak,
Sat the Druid, hoary chief,
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief.

'Princess, if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

'Rome shall perish! write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish—hopeless and abhorred,
Deep in ruin, as in guilt!

'Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

'Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame!

'Then, the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

'Regions Cæsar never knew,
Thy posterity shall way;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they!'

Such the Bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire;
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
  Felt them in her bosom glow;
Rushed to battle, fought, and died—
  Dying, hurled them at the foe!

'Ruffians! pitiless as proud,
  Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed;
  Shame and ruin wait for you!'

—*Cowper.*

in-dig'-nant, angry and scornful.
mien, look.
coun'-sel, advice.
match'-less, not equalled.
re-sent'-ment, anger caused by a sense of injury.
ab-horred', greatly hated.
re'-gions, parts of the world.
in-vin'-ci-ble, not to be conquered.
preg'-nant, full of.
ce-les'-ti-al, heavenly.
chords, strings of a musical instrument.
a-wards', gives or pronounces as a judge.
ven'-geance, punishment for an injury.

Roman rods.—Boadicea was publicly scourged with rods by the Roman officers, because she demanded her rights from them.

The Gaul is at her gates.—The priest is made in vision to see the fall of Rome. The Gaul here means the barbarians who in the fifth century overthrew the Roman Empire, and laid it waste. Just at the time the Romans were leaving Britain, their city was taken and spoiled by the fierce leader of one of the barbarian tribes. In this way Rome suffered the evils which she had inflicted on so many other nations.

Har'-mon-y.—After the people of Italy had completely lost their skill and renown in war, they became very famous as musicians. With fine 'sounds' and 'harmony' they gained the praise which they could no longer do by 'arms.'

Pro'-gen-y.—The progeny of the forests were the oaks of which the famous English ships were made, the 'hearts of oak.' The oaks, when built into ships, winged with sails, and armed with thundering guns, were to conquer in every sea.

Thy pos-ter'-i-ty.—The people of England, who were to build up an empire extending over regions of which Cæsar had never heard.

Fought and died.—The common account is that Boadicea died from taking poison; but Cowper here follows another account, according to which she died in battle.

LESSON VIII.

Julius Agricola, 78–84 A.D.

1. About twenty years after the death of Boadicea, Julius Agricola appeared upon the scene as commander. He was the greatest and best ruler that had ever been sent to this island. He admired the Britons for the brave way in which they had defended their native land. He had been amongst them before, and knew how quick they would be to learn, if only he could gain their friendship. There is no doubt, therefore, that when this able man came to Britain as ruler, he had resolved to make a great change in the country before leaving it again.

2. But only the southern portion of the island had as yet been conquered. Before Agricola, therefore, could instruct the Britons in the arts of peace, he had to show them that he was a great warrior. He marched northwards, into what is now named Scotland, but which was at that time called Caledonia. It was inhabited by a brave and fierce race; and doubtless, also, many Britons who had fled northwards had taken refuge amongst them.

3. Agricola led his army among their fastnesses, and year by year drove them farther and farther north, until he reached the foot of the Grampian Mountains. Here they made a last stand under a renowned chief named Galgacus.

84 A.D.

4. The battle which took place was like all the rest fought during that period. The Caledonians rushed

to the charge with headlong valour, as the Scottish Highlanders have done many a time since. Their claymores were sharp, but they could make no impression upon the firm ranks of the Romans. They were completely defeated. Those who did not fall in battle fled to their native mountains, where it was impossible for Agricola to follow them.

5. During Agricola's campaigns in the north, his fleets sailed along the coast in company, so as to afford him needful supplies. When he returned, he ordered his sailors to keep on northward, and explore the coast, and see what Britain was really like; for as yet, the Romans were not certain that it was an island. They thought it might perhaps be a peninsula. The fleet sailed through the Pentland Firth, and round the Western Isles, and thus settled that point in geography. In one of his campaigns, also, he built a line of forts between the firths of Forth and Clyde, to separate the savage tribes of the north from the Roman portion of the island.

6. But Agricola was not merely a famous warrior. His wish was, as we have seen, to *Romanise* the Britons—that is, to make them like the Romans in their ways of living. He knew this could not be done by harsh means. He therefore treated all who submitted to him with great kindness, and gradually persuaded them to imitate their conquerors. The Britons were a grateful race, and honoured him in return. Cities now began to spring up, and good roads were made. Instead of rude huts appeared houses built in the Roman style. The people clothed themselves in Roman fashion, and the Latin tongue

began to be spoken by some of the upper classes, instead of their old language.

7. Thus, like all men who deserve to be called Great, Agricola succeeded in performing the task he had set himself to do. And when he left the country, after a rule of seven years, he carried away with him the respect and good wishes of the natives. If he had stayed seventeen instead of seven years, what might he not have been able to do? We may truly say of him, as our great poet Shakspeare has said of another great Roman:

This was the noblest Roman of them all.

A-gric'-o-la	**Gal'-ga-cus**	**Rom-an-ise'**	**fash'-ion**
Cal-e-do'-ni-a	**im-pres'-sion**	**per-suad'-ed**	**lan'-guage**
Gram'-pi-an	**ge-og'-ra-phy**	**hon'-oured**	**suc-ceed'-ed**

fast'-ness-es, strong places.
re-nowned', famous.
clay'-mores, broadswords, large swords.
cam-paign', time during which an army keeps the field.
ex-plore', search out.
pen-in'-su-la, a piece of land which is almost an island.
im'-i-tate, do like; follow the ways of.
Lat'-in tongue, the tongue spoken by the Romans.
per-form'-ing, doing, finishing.

LESSON IX.

The Romans in Britain, 84–410 A.D.

1. The whole country might now have been at peace, if it had not been for the Caledonians, who from time to time broke through the line of forts which Agricola had built between the Forth and Clyde, and plundered and laid waste the country to the south of it. They had become so troublesome in the reign of Hadrian, that this emperor came himself to punish them. To stop their incursions for the future, he caused a huge rampart and wall to be built right across the country, from the mouth of the Tyne to the Solway Firth. It was guarded by many soldiers, who lived in forts or small castles placed at certain distances all along it. 121 A.D.

Portion of Hadrian's Wall.

2. So strongly built was Hadrian's Wall, that even now, after the lapse of nearly eighteen hundred years, parts of it remain here and there, and may be traced. It is impossible to gaze upon these remains,

and upon the country to the north and south, without feeling what an important part this wall played in the history of Roman Britain. About a hundred years afterwards, the Emperor Severus came; and, after punishing the Caledonians, he repaired the Great Wall.

210 A.D.

3. During the three hundred years or more that the Romans were masters of Britain, great changes took place. The thick forests were cut down, and many of the wild beasts that used to roam in them were destroyed. In place of the forests were to be seen cultivated fields, and green pastures dotted with flocks and herds. On the seas, merchant-vessels sailed to and fro between Britain and the Continent, taking tin, cattle, oysters, and other things, and bringing back in exchange what they needed from other countries.

4. Beautiful cities were built in different parts, many remains of which have been brought to light in later times. Such were London, Bath, Chester, Lincoln, and many others. To make travelling easy from one place to another, good paved roads were made. They were called *strata*, and hence we have our word street. One of these roads—Watling Street—became famous afterwards as the boundary between the English and the Danes. It ran from London to Chester and North Wales. Whatever the Romans made, whether walls, or cities, or roads, they made grand and lasting like their own language.

5. Thus the Britons now lived in quite a new land. Instead of their former rude huts, they had well-built houses; instead of their camps in the woods, they had

fine towns. Many of them spoke the Latin tongue, and clothed themselves like the Romans. The youths of the better class were educated in Roman schools and colleges. They no longer prided themselves, however, on the skilful management of the war-chariot, but became fond of the banquet and the bath. They thus lost the warlike spirit of their forefathers; and, when the day of trouble came upon them afterwards, they were not able to defend themselves.

6. It was during the Roman stay that the Britons obtained the knowledge of the Christian faith. It is not known who first preached the gospel to them. It seemed to 'spring and grow up,' no one knew how. Perhaps some humble Roman soldier first told the glad tidings. However this may be, the old Druidism had entirely disappeared. Churches were built, and Christian priests took the place of Druids in being the guides of the people. Some of the Roman emperors hated the new faith, and put to death many of the Christians in their dominions. In Britain, St Alban was the first who suffered death in this way rather than give up his faith; and he thus became the first British martyr. The present town of St Albans is called after him. **304 A.D.**

7. The time came at last when the Roman soldiers were forced to leave Britain. The warlike tribes of Northern Europe were pressing so hard on Italy, that their help was required at home. After the departure of the Romans, the Britons were in a very wretched condition. They had been so long under the Roman rule, that they had lost their old **410 A.D.**

warlike spirit. Besides, many of the bravest of their youth had been taken into Gaul and elsewhere to help to fight the battles of Rome, and had left their bones in foreign lands. So the Picts and Scots overspread the land, slaying and burning without mercy.

Cal-e-do'-ni-ans	**guard'-ed**	**oy'-sters**	**Christ'-ian**
plun'-dered	**Hăd'-ri-an**	**stra'-ta**	**St Al'-bans**
trou'-ble-some	**Sev-ē'-rus**	**Wat'-ling**	**for'-eign**

in-cur'-sion, an inroad made by an enemy.
re-paired', mended.
cul'-ti-vat-ed, tilled.
ban'-quet, feast.
Dru'-id-ism, religion of the Druids.
dom-in'-ions, lands or countries ruled over.
mar'-tyr, one who dies for the truth.

Picts and Scots.—The people formerly called Caledonians, who lived beyond the Roman wall, were now called Picts. The Scots were roving, plundering people, who crossed in boats from Ireland. They afterwards settled in Argyllshire, and gave their name to the country now called Scotland.

SETTLEMENT OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS, 449–827 A.D.

LESSON X.

The Coming of the Anglo-Saxons, 449–582 A.D.

1. Just about this time, when the Britons were in such a sad state from the ravages of the Picts and Scots, war-vessels from the coasts of Germany and Denmark began to make their appearance on the shores of Britain. They were manned by pirates, who were never so happy as when they were sailing

in search of booty to some distant land. Those pirates were mostly very tall, with blue eyes, and long yellow hair. Their weapons were axes, swords, spears, and maces; and in battle they were terrible foes. They had different names, such as *Angles*, *Saxons*, and *Jutes;* but they were all nearly akin to each other, and spoke much the same language—a language which, in fact, was the same as ours.

2. They were heathens, and their chief god was *Woden*, the god of war, from whom we have our name Wednesday. *Thor*, the god of thunder and storms, was another (hence the name Thursday). Those who fell in battle fighting bravely with their faces to the foe, expected to go straight to their heaven, and to be rewarded by continual feasting, and drinking out of the skulls of their enemies. No wonder, that when such warriors came into Britain, Christian priests were slain and churches burnt.

3. Those fierce peoples had made attempts to swoop down upon Britain, even when the Romans held the country; but they had been kept in check by the Roman fleets. The Romans had an officer whose special duty it was to watch for them, and oppose their landing. His title was *Count of the Saxon Shore*. But after the departure of the Romans, it was quite easy for them, not only to land and plunder the coasts, but also to settle and live here if they chose. We are told, indeed, that sometimes the Britons implored their help against the Picts and Scots, promising to reward them for it. They

accepted the invitation, and soon drove the northern barbarians back to their own country.

4. But having once obtained a footing in what appeared to them so fertile a land, these hardy warriors did not feel inclined to go away again. They desired to have the country for their own.

Anglo-Saxon Ships.

They sent word to their countrymen across the ocean, who, in their swift ships driven both with oar and sail, came over the sea in large numbers. They landed now upon one part of the coast, now upon another—south, east, and north—burning villages and churches, and killing and robbing the inhabitants. The Britons encountered them bravely on many a hard-fought field. But fresh bands of invaders were continually coming, and the natives were driven, year by year, farther and farther westward, until the greater portion of the

country remained in the hands of their fierce conquerors.

5. We must not suppose, however, that this conquest took place all at once. The country was only conquered bit by bit. Sometimes the strong cities, which had been built by the Romans, held out for a long time. Our forefathers' headlong bravery was not suited for overcoming stone walls. It was in the open field that they drove all before them. For more than a hundred years these invasions went on. At the end of that time we find the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes settled in all the eastern portion of the island, from the English Channel to the Firth of Forth, and as far west as the river Severn. The Britons were confined to the western portion of the country. Of the different kingdoms founded by the invaders, we shall learn in the next lesson.

Jutes	**con-tin'-u-al**	**of'-fi-cer**	**con'-quer-ors**
Wod'-en	**swoop**	**oar**	**in-va'-sions**

rav'-ag-es, destruction.
pi'-rates, sea-robbers.
ma'-ces, clubs with a heavy iron head.
boot'-y, spoil, plunder.
im-plored', prayed, besought.
bar-ba'-ri-ans, savage people.
en-coun'-tered, met, fought with.

The Anglo-Saxons belonged to a different race from the Britons. The Britons, who were the forefathers of the Welsh, belonged to the Celtic race, in which also the Highlanders and Irish are included. The Anglo-Saxons belonged to what is called the Teutonic race. Thus the English are Teutons, as are also the Dutch and Germans.

LESSON XI.

The Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms.

1. We have already seen that our forefathers came from Germany, and that there were different tribes of them, as the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. We also know what sort of people they were when they first came, and that, in the course of one hundred and thirty years or so, they conquered a great portion of Roman Britain, and settled in it themselves, driving the natives towards the west. We are now going to learn something about the different kingdoms which they founded.

2. The first settlers who came were the Jutes. The common account is that they were under two leaders called *Hengest* and *Horsa*. It is said that the British prince Vortigern asked them to help him against the Picts and Scots. They did so, and received as a reward the Isle of Thanet. One story goes that Vortigern fell in love with the daughter of Hengest. However this may be, their friendship with the Britons did not last long. They wanted more than they had got. Several battles were fought, and the end of it was that the

457 A.D. Jutes gained the mastery, and founded the kingdom of **Kent**. Such of the Britons as were not slain or made slaves, were driven entirely away.

3. The next people who came were a body of Saxons. They landed on the south coast, not far

from where William the Norman landed in later times. They easily conquered the open country, but

there was an old Roman town with strong walls which gave them some trouble. When at last they

succeeded in taking it, they were so angry with the defenders that they put every one of them to death. This part of the land became the country of the **South Saxons,** and consisted of what are now known as the counties of Sussex and Surrey.

4. The third kingdom set up was that of the West Saxons, or **Wessex.** The Saxon leader who made this conquest was *Cerdic,* from whom nearly all the kings and queens who have since reigned over England have been descended. There is no such name as Wessex now, because it was not made up of only one shire like Kent, but of seven shires at least lying to the west of Sussex. Cerdic and his followers took a long time, and had some hard fighting to go through, before they could call this part of the country their own. They were opposed, so the story goes, by the famous King Arthur, who had for his chief officers the 'sixty knights of the Round Table.' But, after a great many battles had been fought, the worshippers of Woden and Thor proved too strong for King Arthur and his circle of knights, and all that country became Wessex. It was the most important of all the kingdoms, because afterwards, as we shall learn, the other kingdoms were joined to it one by one, till its king became the king of all England.

519 A.D.

5. The next settlement was that of the **East Saxons,** taking up the counties of Essex and Middlesex. It was the smallest of all, but it contained the old Roman town of Colchester, and, more important still, London.

6. The next three kingdoms were all founded by

the Angles. If we look at the map, we shall see that they took up far more space than the others. That is one reason why, afterwards, the whole country got the name of England (*Angle-land*), and not *Saxony*. The great kingdom of **Northumbria,** founded by *Ida*, stretched from the Humber to the Firth of Forth. It was at one time divided into two parts, called *Bernicia* and *Deira*. The latter lay between the Humber and the Tees (the Yorkshire of the present day), and the former between the Tees and Forth. The chief city in Northumbria was the old Roman city now called York. **547 A.D.**

7. **East Anglia** was divided into two parts—*North-folk* and *South-folk*—which are now called Norfolk and Suffolk. It will not be difficult to find these on any map.

8. The great kingdom of **Merçia,** which included the midland counties of England, was made up of several little states which had been gradually joined together. When it became one kingdom, it was one of the most famous of them all, and some of its kings were very great and powerful. **582 A.D.**

9. We have now had an account of the setting up of seven kingdoms—one by the Jutes, three by the Saxons, and three by the Angles. We must not suppose, however, that these kingdoms always remained fixed just as we have described them. They were frequently at war with each other and with the Welsh. So there would sometimes be more than seven kingdoms, at other times not so many. When any one of the kings had shown himself to be greater than the others by his bravery in war,

and by his wisdom in council, he received the title of *Bretwalda* (Wide Ruler); and we can easily fancy that, when the other states quarrelled, he would step in to settle their disputes.

10. During all these long years of strife our forefathers were still heathens. They might have heard of the gospel from the Britons; but we may be sure that, being the conquerors, they would despise what their slaves said and did. They therefore continued to worship Woden and Thor, just as they did when first they came. In the next lesson, however, we shall learn how they were converted to the Christian faith.

Hen'-gest	**de-scend'-ed**	**Ber-ni'-ci-a**	**coun'-cil**
Vor'-ti-gern	**Wes'-sex**	**De-i'-ra**	**Bret-wal'-da**
Than'-et	**knights**	**An'-gli-a**	**quar'-relled**
en-tire'-ly	**Col'-ches-ter**	**Mer'-ci-a**	**de-spise'**
Cerd'-ic	**North-um'-bri-a**	**grad'-u-al-ly**	**con-tin'-ued**

LESSON XII.

How the Anglo-Saxons became Christians.

1. We have now to learn how the Anglo-Saxons became Christians. There was, about the end of the sixth century, a good Bishop or Pope of Rome called Gregory the Great. Before he became bishop, he was one day walking through the slave-market of Rome, casting pitying looks upon the poor captives who were exposed for sale. One of the groups especially attracted his notice. It consisted of a number of youths with blue eyes, flaxen hair, and fair complexion. Gregory was struck with their

appearance, so different from the dark-skinned people of his own southern country. He asked to what nation they belonged, and was informed that they were Angles. 'Angles!' said he; '*angels* they would be, if they were not heathens, but Christians.'

2. Gregory never forgot this meeting in the market-place; and when some years afterwards he became pope, he resolved to send Christian missionaries into England to preach the gospel, and turn the people from their heathenism. He chose a good priest called Augustine, and a band of forty monks, to undertake the task.

3. Taking ship, they crossed the Straits of Dover, and landed in Kent. The shores upon which they first set foot, had been trodden by mighty conquerors before. It was here **597 A.D.** that Julius Cæsar and his legions had disembarked, and here also that the chiefs Hengest and Horsa made their first landing. But the small band of peaceful monks who now stepped on land, were greater conquerors by far than any of those who had come before them. They came trusting not in the strength of 'a spear, a sword, or a shield;' but armed with 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the *Word of God.*'

4. The throne of Kent was at that time filled by a king called Ethelbert. He was a very powerful prince, and was the *Bretwalda* of England at that time. He had married a Christian princess. Her name was Bertha, and she was the daughter of the king of Paris. When she came to be Ethelbert's queen, she brought her own Christian priests with

her. So when Augustine and his followers came, perhaps Ethelbert was already half a Christian at heart.

5. Augustine asked the king's permission to preach the new faith before him. Ethelbert willingly granted leave. He did not bring the missionaries into his palace, however, but received them in the open air. There, surrounded by his chief nobles, and with Queen Bertha by his side, he was ready to listen to what the monks had got to say. Augustine and his followers advanced towards him, clad in their priestly robes, and carrying before them a large picture of our Saviour, as well as a splendid silver crucifix, which flashed in the rays of the sun; while the monks who marched behind chanted psalms and prayers. This was something new to the rude worshippers of Woden. Their hearts were touched, and they listened in solemn silence to the preaching of Augustine.

6. After the interview, Ethelbert gave them leave to preach the gospel among his people. They had also suitable houses set apart for them to live in, and were well supplied with money, and with all that they needed. Within a year, the king himself was baptised into the Christian faith. Thousands of his subjects followed his example. New churches were built, and old ones repaired, and the church of Canterbury became the head church of all England.

7. But this was not all the good which flowed from the example of Queen Bertha. She had a daughter, Ethelburga, who grew up to be a noble princess like her mother. She was married to Edwin,

the powerful king of Northumbria, and doubtless had a great share in turning him from the heathen worship. She had the happiness of seeing him become a Christian. His subjects followed the example of their great king, and thus it was that Northumbria was converted to Christianity. Were not Bertha and Ethelburga two noble women?

8. After this, Christianity continued to spread slowly but surely over all the land; and both in the palace and the cottage, both to monarch and peasant, the 'glad tidings of great joy' were at last made known.

cen'-tu-ry	**Au-gus'-tine**	**per-mis'-sion**	**re-paired'**
Greg'-or-y	**dis-em-barked'**	**psalms**	**Can'-ter-bur-y**
es-pe'-cial-ly	**shield**	**suit'-a-ble**	**Eth'-el-burg-a**
gos'-pel	**Eth'-el-bert**	**bap-tised'**	**Chris-ti-an'-it-y**
heath'-en-ism	**Berth'-a**	**sub'-jects**	**mon'-arch**

at-tract'-ed, drew to itself, gained.
com-plex'-ion, colour of the skin, especially of the face.
mis'-sion-ar-ies, men sent to preach the gospel.
cru'-ci-fix, figure or picture of Christ fixed on the cross.
sol'-emn, sacred, awful.
in'-ter-view, meeting.
peas'-ant, a worker on a farm.

LESSON XIII.

The Venerable Bede, 674–735 A.D.

1. In those early times the art of printing was unknown. So, as may be supposed, there were very few books, and what few there were, had all to be written with the pen. And in fact, there were not many people in those days of sufficient learning to write books, or even to read them, if they had been written. And this was the case not only among

the poor, but also among the richest and noblest in the land. It is on this account a pleasure to hear something about the Venerable Bede, who was a learned and pious monk of that time. It is from his writings that we get most of the stories of that period; among others, that of the coming of St Augustine, which we read about in the last lesson.

2. Bede was born at Jarrow about the year 674. Jarrow stands on the south bank of the river Tyne, in the county of Durham, which was part of the kingdom of Northumbria when Bede was born. A pretty little quiet spot Jarrow would be in those days. But it is very different now. At the present time, it is a busy, bustling town; and the clang of hammers is heard the livelong day from busy ship-building yards, where throngs of workmen are employed in building huge iron-plated vessels—'monsters of the deep,' of which neither the Venerable Bede nor any of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers ever dreamed.

3. About six or seven miles farther to the south is the river Wear. On the northern bank, near the mouth, was a famous monastery, after which the town is still called Monkwearmouth. When Bede was a boy, the twin monastery of St Paul at Jarrow had not been built; so he was brought up at Monkwearmouth, and received his education there, for the only schools in those days were the schools in monasteries or in churches, and only the priests had any learning. The abbot of Monkwearmouth, when Bede was a pupil there, was a learned and pious priest, who had travelled much on the Continent; and it is said he was the

first to introduce glass windows into England. Bede was always a very studious boy, and loved to pore over his books, which were written in Latin. He was also very fond of music, and the singing of psalms was one of his chief delights.

4. We may be sure that such a pupil as Bede was, would be a great favourite with the abbot and with the other inmates of the monastery; and, when the new monastery was built at Jarrow, and he left them to go and dwell there, they would all be very sorry to part with him. However, the distance between the two places was not great, and the road was pleasant, and no doubt many friendly visits would be exchanged from time to time between them.

5. Well, Bede grew up to be a very learned man, and became a priest very early. He might have risen to a much higher station, but he did not wish for it. His 'mind was set on things above, not on things on the earth.' From the time of his entering the monastery at Jarrow till the day of his death, he lived a quiet and peaceful life, studying and writing. His chief book, which was in Latin, is called the *History of the Anglo-Saxon Church.* He was much beloved by his brother-monks for his goodness; and when he lay on his death-bed, many of them stood around shedding bitter tears. His name still lives among us, while the names of many a grim warrior, who could wield nothing but sword or battle-axe, have long ago been forgotten. The name *Venerable* was given to him on account of his piety and learning.

6. Thus we see that a great change had come over

the Anglo-Saxons since they had become Christians. Churches had been built for worship. So had **monasteries** in different parts of the country, where the *monks* might live apart from the world and serve God. The head of these monks was called the *abbot.* Sometimes noble ladies lived apart, and never married, but spent much of their time in relieving the poor, and doing many charitable deeds. They were very skilful with the needle also, and spent much of their spare time in working pieces of *tapestry.* They were called *nuns,* the chief being the lady *abbess.*

Bede	**Monk-wear'-mouth**	**wield**	**mar'-ried**
suf-fi'-cient	**e-du-ca'-tion**	**ac-count'**	**char'-i-ta-ble**
Jar'-row	**Con'-tin-ent**	**a-part'**	**nuns**
live'-long	**pore**	**ab'-bot**	**ab'-bess**

ven'-er-a-ble, worthy of reverence.
mon'-as-ter-y, place where monks live together.
in-tro-duce', bring in.
stud'-i-ous, much given to learning.
re-liev'-ing, helping.
ta'-pes-try, hangings with figures wrought into them.

LESSON XIV.

Egbert, Over-Lord of All England, 800–836 A.D.

1. The kingdoms which were founded in England by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers lasted for more than two hundred years. During this long period, the country often presented a scene of war and bloodshed. Angles and Saxons and Jutes, brethren of the same stock though they were, often met in deadly strife, each striving to obtain the mastery over the others. Great princes there were during these years, famous as warriors and statesmen; but

we come now to one who was greater than all—Egbert the Bright-eyed over-lord of all England.

2. Egbert was the rightful heir to the throne of Wessex, but in his younger days his place was taken by one who was his bitter enemy. He therefore became an exile from the kingdom of his fathers, and spent many years of his life at the court of Charles the Great, king of the Franks. It was, perhaps, fortunate for him that he had to pass through those years of trial; for, during his stay on the continent, he learned, from the example of Charles, to be a great general and a wise ruler. Doubtless he often thought what a great pity it was that England should be divided into so many small kingdoms, which were continually quarrelling with each other, and how much better it would be, if they could all be joined into one, and dwell together in peace.

3. In the year 800 his enemy died, and he was chosen by the *Witan*, or assembly of wise men, to be king of Wessex. He reigned thirty-six years, and during that time succeeded in bringing the greater part of Britain under his sway. The smaller kingdoms he joined on to his own of Wessex; but he allowed the larger ones—Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria—to keep their own princes. They were, however, his *vassals*, or his *men*, and had to acknowledge him as over-lord, and render him *homage*. He also brought the Welsh more completely under his power.

4. In order to obtain these conquests, Egbert had to fight many battles; but, after all, not so many as

might have been expected. For most of the other kingdoms were weary of fighting, and the people longed for a time of peace, that they might be able to attend to their fields, and to their flocks and herds. Besides, many of their own princes had either been slain, or had left their kingdoms to go and live in monasteries. Moreover, they all respected Egbert, because he was descended from Cerdic, the famous warrior of old, and therefore also, as they believed, from their god Woden. Thus the wish of his youth was to a great extent fulfilled, and he became over-lord of all England.

5. But amidst all this glory, a terribly black danger-cloud was hanging over the land. In one of the battles which Egbert had fought with them, the Welsh were helped by a body of strange warriors, who had lately arrived on the coast in their war-vessels. These strangers had a black raven for their flag, and they fought so fiercely and so bravely, that it was all Egbert himself could do to drive them back. Could he have foreseen the sufferings they would bring upon his country in after-times, it must have sadly imbittered the closing days of his life. He died in 836, and was followed on the throne of Wessex first by his son, and afterwards by his four grandsons.

Battle of Hengest's-down, 835 A.D.

Eg'-bert	**quar'-rel-ling**	**vas'-sals**	**de-scend'-ed**
scene	**Wit'-an**	**ac-know'-ledge**	**be-lieved'**
war'-ri-ors	**suc-ceed'-ed**	**hom'-age**	**ful-filled'**
con-tin'-u-al-ly	**al-lowed'**	**com-plete'-ly**	**im-bit'-tered**

ex'-ile, one away from his native country. | **as-sem'-bly,** meeting.

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DANES, 836–1042 A.D.

LESSON XV.

The Danes.

1. The strange warriors who helped the Welsh to fight against Egbert were *Danes*, who had come across the ocean from Denmark and Norway in their war-ships in search of plunder. They had other names besides, as *Northmen* or *Norsemen*. These names were given to them because they came from the *north* of Europe. They were also called *vikings*, from *vik*, the name for the bays or sheltered creeks on the coast of Norway, from which they started on their voyages.

Norse Galley.

2. The Danes were of the same race as the English, and spoke almost the same language. But they were heathens still, and worshipped Odin or Woden, and therefore they hated the Christian English with a bitter hatred, because they had forsaken their old gods; and whenever they got a chance, they burned the churches and monasteries, and slew the monks.

3. More than three hundred years before, as we have seen, the Angles, and Saxons, and Jutes came over the sea in like manner, and fought against the Welsh of Britain, and took the country to live in themselves. They had now become the lords of the soil, and loved their new land of England. They had quite given up their heathen ways, and had taken to tilling the soil, and building cities, churches, and monasteries.

4. It was now their turn to defend their land against enemies from abroad, and to undergo great hardships. Unhappily for them, they had lost the love of the sea which distinguished their forefathers when they first came; or they might have gone forth to meet the heathen Danes on the ocean, and prevented them from landing. The peaceful inhabitants—the women and the children, the priest and the monk—might have remained at home in safety, instead of being cruelly murdered, as they often were; and the land might have been saved from the invaders.

5. As it was, the Northmen could land upon any part of the coast they pleased without hindrance. It was not until the time of Alfred the Great, of whom we shall hear presently, that the English began to build war-ships, and meet the Danes upon the sea.

6. The first parties of Danes who landed, came for plunder, and when they had obtained it, sailed away again, and carried the news of what they had seen to their countrymen across the ocean. After this, the Northmen were no longer satisfied with

their own cold and bleak shores. They determined to try to conquer England. At intervals, for over two hundred years, the terrible struggle went on. Many a hard battle was fought, the victory sometimes remaining with one side, and sometimes with the other.

7. Once, as we shall see, the Danes did succeed in conquering England; but it was only for a short time. Large numbers of them, however, settled in the country, especially in the east and north. But being of the same race as the English, they mixed and gradually blended with them, leaving also a few traces of their own speech in our language.

8. We may well be proud of the bravery, the energy, and the enterprise of both; for are not the English of to-day sea-kings still? Is not the flag of England on every sea? No longer indeed is it a terror to those who look upon it, like the raven flag of old; but a symbol, wherever it floats, of power and wealth, of truth and justice, of faith and freedom.

Norse'-men	**lan'-guage**	**sat'-is-fied**	**grad'-u-al-ly**
vik'-ings	**dis-tin'-guished**	**de-ter'-mined**	**speech**
creeks	**in-hab'-it-ants**	**con'-quer**	**en'-ter-prise**
voy'-a-ges	**hin'-drance**	**re-main'-ing**	**jus'-tice**

at in'-ter-vals, now and again, not continually.

blend'-ed, so mixed together, that we cannot tell one from another.

en'-er-gy, power to do work without tiring.

ra'-ven, with the figure of a raven on it.

sym'-bol, sign, token.

LESSON XVI.

Alfred the Great—His Early Troubles, 871-878 A.D.

1. Thirty-five years had passed away since the death of Egbert. During these years, there had been terrible fighting with the Danes, who were striving with all their might to become masters of England. They had overrun a great part of the north and east, burning all the abbeys on their march, and robbing them of their treasures. Wessex was the only kingdom which they had not yet quite overcome, and now they were gathering round it on all sides like wolves to the feast.

2. It was in this time of dire distress that Alfred, the fourth grandson of Egbert, was chosen by the Wise Men to succeed to the throne. During the first few years of his reign, he did all in his power to rid the country of the Danes. But his subjects did not support him at that time, as they ought to have done. To crown all, Guthrum, one of the Danish leaders, suddenly appeared in the heart of Wessex with a brave and numerous army.

3. Alfred's fortunes were then at their lowest ebb. He was obliged to leave his home, with his wife and children, and a small band of faithful followers, and to conceal himself in Athelney, a small marshy tract of land in Somersetshire. In this wild and lonely spot, disguised in the coarse dress of a peasant, Alfred remained for several months, waiting for happier times.

4. Some of his days were spent apart from his

friends, in the sheltered nooks of the forest, or in the dwellings of the poor peasantry, who herded their swine in the neighbouring swamps. It was a sad change for a king, to sit on the rough logs of wood, which served as seats in those rude huts,

Alfred in the Peasant's Hut.

and to watch the smoke curling up from the fire in the middle of the floor to a hole in the roof, while he thought with sorrow of the misfortunes of his country. He heeded not the chidings of the ignorant housewife, who scolded him for letting the

cakes burn. His thoughts were set upon delivering his people from their enemies.

5. Alfred never altogether lost heart. He put his trust in God, who would give back to him the throne of his fathers. By-and-by things began to mend. Messengers arrived with good tidings. The stout alderman of Devon had defeated and slain one of the Danish chiefs, and captured the famous raven banner. This stirring news raised the spirits of Alfred and his followers, and they longed for an opportunity of once more trying their strength against the Danes.

6. Alfred now began to make himself known; and many of his bravest followers, who had mourned for him as dead, came and joined him. They built a fortress on the island, and soon felt themselves strong enough to sally forth and cut off small parties of the Danes who had strayed away from the main army. The news quickly spread among the West Saxons that their king still lived, and was waiting to lead them against the enemy; and from town and village, from hamlet and lonely forest hut, there came forth bands of men eager for the battle.

ab'-beys	**nu'-mer-ous**	**tract**	**en'-e-mies**
sup-port'	**ebb**	**shel'-tered**	**de-feat'-ed**
Guth'-rum	**o-bliged'**	**neigh'-bour-ing**	**cap'-tured**
sud'-den-ly	**con-ceal'**	**child'-ings**	**op-por-tu'-ni-ty**
ap-peared'	**Ath'-el-ney**	**ig'-nor-ant**	**vill'-age**

treas'-ures, riches, money.
dis-guised', wearing a different dress, so that people don't know you.
peas'-an-try, working-people in the country.
de-liv'-er-ing, freeing.
al'-der-man, an Anglo-Saxon chief or nobleman.
sal'-ly, rush out suddenly.
ham'-let, a cluster of houses in the country.

LESSON XVII.

Alfred the Great—The Battle of Edington, 878 A.D.

1. The main army of the Danes was encamped on a hill in Wiltshire. Alfred and his followers left their place of refuge in Athelney, and set forth to give them battle. Their line of march lay through the forest of Selwood, the mazes of which served to conceal them from stray parties of the enemy. It was the spring-time of the year, and the woods were alive with the singing of birds, while the air was filled with the sweet perfume of the hawthorn, and all the flowers that grow during this season. It must have been a pleasant change for Alfred and his men, after having been shut up in Athelney so long, to find themselves treading their own greensward once more.

2. Before attacking the Danes, it is said that Alfred resolved to visit their camp himself in the disguise of a wandering minstrel, in order to learn their strength, and also to see whether they were prepared to resist a sudden attack. He had been fond of poetry and music from his youth up, and was a skilful player upon the harp. It was quite easy for him, therefore, to gain admittance into the camp of the enemy. The Danes, little thinking who their guest was, treated him kindly, and he in turn did all he could to please them. It is even said that he was introduced to the royal tent, where he delighted the grim warriors assembled there,

by singing the praises of the sea-kings of old. Having seen all he wished to see, the minstrel took his departure, and returned to his own followers, who doubtless were glad to see him again in safety after his daring adventure.

3. The day had at last arrived which was to decide the fate of Wessex, and also who were to be masters of England. It was the morning of battle. Not expecting an attack, many of the Danes had left their camp on the summit of the hill, and spread themselves in careless groups over the plain of Edington. This was the moment that Alfred had waited for. At the head of his bravest troops, he rushed forward to separate them from their camp. The Danes were taken by surprise; but they were not the men readily to turn their backs to a foe. Recovering themselves, therefore, they fought with the courage of despair. The men of Wessex, also, who felt that now or never was their chance of victory, laid about them right and left with resistless might. For hours the battle raged. But at last the Danes broke their ranks and fled up the hill to gain the protection of their camp. They were pursued by the furious Saxons, who hewed down without mercy all who did not escape within the ramparts.

4. The Danes were now shut up in their camp. They held out for a fortnight; but at last, having lost all hope of relief from their countrymen, they were obliged to yield. Alfred did not, and could not, drive them out of the country. In the peace of Wedmore he offered them a large part of the east

and north of England to live in, on condition *that they became Christians.* For himself he kept all the south part of the country. Guthrum and many of his followers accepted these terms. They received the rite of baptism, and kept themselves within the lands set apart for them.

Peace of Wedmore, 878 A.D.

5. The great victory of Edington so broke the power of the Danes, that Alfred was not troubled with them any more for some years to come; and when fresh bands did arrive in the latter years of his reign, they found him so well prepared for them both by sea and land, that they had no chance of regaining their lost power while he lived.

en-camped'	**in-tro-duced'**	**sur-prise'**	**Wed'-more**
re'-fuge	**ad-ven'-ture**	**cour'-age**	**con-di'-tion**
Sel'-wood	**ar-rived'**	**de-spair'**	**ac-cept'-ed**
con-ceal'	**de-cide'**	**pro-tec'-tion**	**bap'-tism**
at-tack'-ing	**Ed'-ing-ton**	**pur-sued'**	**pre-pared'**
skil'-ful	**sep'-ar-ate**	**re-lief'**	**re-gain'-ing**

maz'-es, confused and perplexing paths.
per'-fume, scent.
green'-sward, green grass.
min'-strel, one who sang songs to the music of the harp.
ad-mit'-tance, entrance.
sum'-mit, top.

LESSON XVIII.

Alfred the Great—A Useful Life, 878-901 A.D.

1. The freeing of his country from the attacks of the Danes was a great deed; but a nobler task even than this remained for Alfred to perform. His heart bled when he thought of the sufferings which had been brought upon his country during the late

terrible struggle with the invaders; and to restore his kingdom to peace and happiness once more was the great aim of his after-life; and well he carried out his purpose.

2. The whole land presented a scene which was enough to sadden much harder hearts than Alfred's. Towns and villages had been burnt down, and the inhabitants either slain or driven to take refuge in woods and marshes. Splendid monasteries, which had once been the abode of peaceful monks, were now only blackened ruins; and their old inmates, in many cases, had been put to death. Smiling fields had been laid waste, and implements of husbandry lay rusting for want of use. The laws of the country were no longer observed; and what learning there had been, had well-nigh perished out of the land.

3. Alfred knew that the first thing needed was to make his country safe from invasion. He therefore had strong stone castles and forts built in different commanding places. He trained his subjects in the arts of war; and above all, he had vessels built for the purpose of meeting the Danes on the ocean; and he thus revived the old seafaring spirit of his people. So, in course of time, towns and villages began to rise from their ruins once more; churches and monasteries were rebuilt; the husbandman returned to his tillage, the shepherd to his flocks and herds, the monk to his cell, and the country entered upon a long course of peace and prosperity.

4. Alfred also made a collection of all the wise laws of the older kings, and added himself the

golden rule: '*Do unto others what you would that others do unto you.*' But he knew that wise laws would be of little use, unless there were also just judges to see them properly carried out. In the various districts of the country, therefore, judges were appointed to uphold the laws. The people soon became more law-abiding than ever they had been before; and men used to say in those days, that if golden bracelets were hung up by the wayside, no one would dare to touch them.

5. Alfred was also much grieved at the want of learning among his people. He therefore built schools in different places. He had one near his own palace, where the sons of the nobles were taught. He invited learned men from other countries to live at his court. Among those who came were Asser the Welshman, who wrote a life of Alfred; John, the Old Saxon, who came from Germany; and several other good and thoughtful men. He also translated certain books himself from Latin into our own English tongue, so that not only the clergy, but also the common people, might be able to read them. One of his translations was the Venerable Bede's History, of which we have heard before, besides several portions of the Holy Scriptures.

6. In order that he might have time for all these good works, Alfred never wasted an hour. He divided the day into equal portions, each of which had its appointed task. Thus, although he did not live to be old—for he died at the age of fifty-two—no king ever did more for the good of his subjects.

7. Alfred's useful life came to a close in the year

901. Whether we consider the brave and hopeful spirit he displayed during his early troubles, or his heroism on the field of Edington, or the laborious and useful life he led afterwards for the benefit of his people, we must admit that no prince was ever more deserving of the title of **Great.**

ter'-ri-ble	**peace'-ful**	**course**	**trans-lat'-ed**
strug'-gle	**in'-mates**	**pros-per'-i-ty**	**tongue**
pre-sent'-ed	**sea'-far-ing**	**col-lec'-tion**	**por'-tions**
vil'-la-ges	**ru'-ins**	**dis'-tricts**	**al-though'**
re'-fuge	**shep'-herd**	**ap-point'-ed**	**her'-o-ism**
mon'-as-ter-ies	**cell**	**grieved**	**la-bo'-ri-ous**

im'-ple-ments of hus'-ban-dry, the plough and other such things used in farming.
til'-lage, ploughing and cultivating the ground.
law-a-bid'-ing, obedient to the law.
brace'-lets, ornaments for the wrist.
dis-played', showed.

LESSON XIX.

The Seven Kings and the Seventy-seven Prosperous Years after Alfred, 901–978 A.D.

1. For seventy-seven years after the death of the great Alfred, England was, on the whole, prosperous. Those Danes who were already settled in the east and north did, indeed, give some trouble at times by trying to set up a separate kingdom of their own; but there were no more invasions of foreign Danes during that period.

2. During these seventy-seven years, seven kings—all descendants of Alfred—reigned in England. There was not one really bad king among all the seven; and many of them were wise and brave, and ruled the country well.

3. The first of the seven kings was *Edward the Elder*, Alfred's son and successor. He was a brave and able king like his father, though he was not so fond of learning. He had a good deal of fighting to go through with the Danes who were settled in the country, but in the end he overcame them, and ruled over them. He was the first king who styled himself *King of England.* **901–925 A.D.**

4. After Edward came the great *Athelstan*, his son. When a little boy, he was much beloved by his grandfather Alfred, who used to dandle him on his knee, and say that he would some day be a brave soldier. He also gave him a purple coat, and a little sword with a golden scabbard. His grandfather's words came true, as his enemies found to their cost. Towards the end of his reign, the Danes of the north, with the Scots and Welsh, formed a league against him. But in a great battle, Athelstan gave them such a terrible beating, that they never again became formidable during the time of the 'Seven Kings.' **925–940 A.D.** **Battle of Brunanburh, 937 A.D.**

5. Another famous king during this period was *Edgar, the Peaceful.* His chief adviser was Dunstan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, of whom we shall hear in the next lesson. Edgar's reign was happy and peaceful. His fleets swept the seas, so that foreign enemies did not dare to approach. He regularly made journeys through the country to see that the laws were properly carried out. Both the Scottish and Welsh princes did homage to him as their over-lord; and we are **959–975 A.D.**

told that once, when he visited the city of Chester, he was rowed down the river Dee in the royal barge by eight vassal princes, while he himself sat at the helm. It is also said of him, that in order to rid the country of wolves, he ordered the Welsh to pay three hundred wolves' heads every year as tribute.

Saxon Costumes: King Edgar, Lady, and Page.

pros'-per-ous	**dan'-dle**	**Can'-ter-bur-y**	**hom'-age**
de-scend'-ants	**pur'-ple**	**for'-eign**	**rowed**
suc-cess'-or	**Dun'-stan**	**ap-proach'**	**vas'-sal**
Ath'-el-stan	**arch-bish'-op**	**jour'-neys**	**trib'-ute**

scab'-bard, sheath for a sword.
league, union, alliance.
for'-mi-da-ble, to be feared.

Brunanburh, probably near Beverley, in Yorkshire.
barge, a large and grand boat.

LESSON XX.

Dunstan, 925–988 A.D.

1. The most remarkable man in England during the time of the 'Seven Kings' was Dunstan, monk, abbot, and archbishop. We have already heard of the Venerable Bede, and the quiet and retired life he led, studying and writing in his monastery; but Dunstan was a different sort of monk altogether. He wished to see the church great and powerful, and strove with all his ability to make it so. He was the friend and adviser of kings, and his life was stirring and eventful.

2. Dunstan was the son of noble parents. He was born in the little hamlet of Glastonbury, and received his early education at the school which belonged to the famous abbey there. When still very young, he went to court, where he gained the notice of the great Athelstan. But he seems, even at that time, to have had enemies, who were jealous of his advancement, and so he did not remain long. Soon afterwards, his uncle, the Bishop of Winchester, persuaded him to become a monk, and for some years he gave himself up to the learning of the time, and especially to the study of those arts which were useful to the church, such as music, painting, and metal-work.

3. In course of time, Dunstan became *Abbot of Glastonbury.* While he held that office, Dunstan was very active in rebuilding and adorning the church, and in seeing that the monks kept strictly to their

duties, and lived pious and useful lives. He thus made Glastonbury a pattern for all the other monasteries, and he strove hard afterwards to bring them all to the same standard of perfection.

4. As time went on, Dunstan became also the chief minister of the kings of England, and proved himself to be the ablest and wisest man in the country. So long as men followed his advice, the kingdom was governed wisely, and everything went on well.

5. King Edgar, who promoted him to be *Archbishop of Canterbury*, consulted him in everything, and acted upon his advice. During his remarkable life, he had seen *eight* kings on the throne of England, and had lived through the entire reigns of *six* of them. Altogether, he was the most famous Englishman of the tenth century.

Glas'-ton-bur-y	**met'-al**	**stan'-dard**	**arch-bish'-op**
e-du-ca'-tion	**re-build'-ing**	**per-fec'-tion**	**re-mark'-a-ble**
Win'-ches-ter	**ad-orn'-ing**	**ad-vice'**	**reigns**
per-suad'-ed	**pat'-tern**	**gov'-erned**	**cen'-tu-ry**

jeal'-ous, envious.
ad-vance'-ment, rise.
pro-mot'-ed, raised.
con-sult'-ed, asked advice from.

LESSON XXI.

Ethelred the Unready, 978–1016 A.D.

1. Exactly one hundred years after the battle of Edington, Ethelred, the second son of Edgar, came to the throne. He was the worst of all the old English kings, and, unfortunately for the country, he reigned longer than any of them. On account of the unwise things which he did, he was surnamed the

Unready—that is, the man without counsel. His whole reign was a time of the greatest misery and confusion, owing to the ravages of the Danes; and he does not seem to have shown at any time the spirit which overcomes difficulties.

2. As early as the year 980, the Danes had begun to make their unwelcome appearance again, and scarcely a year passed after this, that they did not land on some part of the coast, and carry on their old tricks of burning and plundering. After the death of Archbishop Dunstan, Ethelred, acting on the advice of unwise counsellors, adopted the foolish and cowardly practice of bribing his enemies to go away by giving them large sums of money. In order to raise this money, he was obliged to lay a tax upon his subjects, called *Dane-geld.* Thus the poor English had not only to see their fields plundered and their homesteads burned, but they had also to fill the pouches of their foes with their hard-earned money, besides having to submit to insults and ill-treatment from these haughty *Lord Danes.*

3. In the year 994, Sweyn, king of Denmark, came himself, and for several years after this kept on ravaging the southern parts of England. In the year 1002, more money was raised and given to him to go away. Many of Sweyn's followers, however, remained behind; and Ethelred then devised the cruel plan of putting them all to death on a certain day. Many of the English obeyed his instructions only too well, and large numbers of the hated Danes were slain in cold blood.

St Brice's Day, Nov. 13, 1002 A.D.

4. As soon as the news of the event reached Sweyn in Denmark, he vowed he would take a terrible revenge, and never rest till he had conquered England. He kept his word. Year after year fresh bands of Danes kept coming, till the country was gradually overrun by them; and Ethelred fled for refuge to the court of Normandy, the home of his wife Emma.

5. Although Sweyn had succeeded in conquering England, he did not live to be king himself. He died in the year 1014, leaving his conquests to his son Canute. Ethelred also had a son called *Edmund*, who from his great strength and daring was surnamed *Ironside*. Upon his father's death, Edmund struggled bravely for a time to regain the lost throne; but his untimely death a few months afterwards left Canute sole ruler; and thus, at last, a Dane became king of England.

ex-act'-ly	**coast**	**earned**	**in-struc'-tions**
Ed'-ing-ton	**coun'-sell-ors**	**in'-sults**	**re-venge'**
Eth'-el-red	**cow'-ard-ly**	**haugh'-ty**	**over-run'**
un-for'-tu-nate-ly	**prac'-tice**	**Sweyn**	**Nor'-man-dy**
dif'-fi-cul-ties	**pouch'-es**	**ra'-va-ging**	**Can'-ute**

home'-steads, houses on a farm.
de-vised', contrived.
un-time'-ly, before the right time.

Dane'-geld.—Geld means payment. Dane-geld, therefore, was money paid to the Danes.

Lord Danes.—In some parts of England a haughty person is still called a 'lurdane.'

TIME OF DANISH RULE,
1016–1042 A.D.

LESSON XXII.

Canute, 1016–1035 A.D.

1. Like most usurpers, Canute wished to become the head of a long line of kings. To make his throne secure, he was guilty of some cruel actions at the beginning of his reign.

2. But Canute should not be judged too harshly for these things. He had been brought up among scenes of cruelty, and had 'dared to wade through slaughter to a throne;' and although he was a Christian in name, yet he had not at this time entirely got rid of his old pagan habits and feelings. But as he grew older, and listened to the teaching of the church, he became a great and good king, and strove to atone for his past misdeeds.

3. Early in his reign, Canute sent most of his fighting-men back to Denmark, only keeping a certain number to act as a body-guard. These were called his *house-carls*. Englishmen and foreigners were alike permitted to join this band, and thus no special favour was shown to his own people. He ruled over all his subjects with equal justice, and did much to blend Englishmen and Danes into one nation.

4. Canute was a great warrior, and conquered both Norway and Sweden. He was thus king, at one

time, of England, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; but he seems to have liked his kingdom of England best. It was in the northern wars that an Englishman, who became very famous, rose into notice. This was Godwin, who was afterwards made Earl of Wessex, and became a very powerful man.

5. Canute was a great friend of the church, and built several new monasteries. He was fond of visiting the abbey of Ely. We are told that once, as he was being rowed across the mere towards the abbey, he was so much delighted with the chanting of the monks, which could be heard in the distance, that he composed a hymn himself, which was sung for many years afterwards. This story, as well as the famous one about rebuking the flattery of his courtiers on the sea-shore, shows us that Canute had quite got rid of his old heathen ways, and had become a truly Christian king.

6. So peaceful and settled had the kingdom become in the latter part of his reign, that Canute was able to leave it for a time under the care of his four great Earls, and take a journey upon which he had set his heart. This was no less than a pilgrimage to Rome. In those days this journey was long and dangerous, and to make it was considered a sure sign of piety. While at Rome, Canute wrote a long letter to his subjects in England, telling them of all his adventures on the road, what places he had visited, and how he had been received by the pope. He also said in his letter that he was firmly determined to fear God, and to rule his subjects justly.

7. Canute died in the year 1035. His two sons

reigned after him for a short time, and then the old line of kings was restored in the person of Edward, the son of Ethelred and Emma.

Can'-ute	**mis-deeds'**	**Swe'-den**	**dan'-ger-ous**
guil'-ty	**for'-eign-ers**	**re-buk'-ing**	**ad-ven'-tures**
scenes	**per-mit'-ted**	**flat'-ter-y**	**re-ceived'**
slaugh'-ter	**spe'-cial**	**cour'-tiers**	**de-ter'-mined**

u-surp'-er, one who wrongfully seizes a crown.
a-tone', make up for.
mere, lake.
pil'-grim-age, a journey to some sacred place.
House-carls, house-soldiers, or household troops as they are now called. *Carl* simply meant man.

LESSON XXIII.

King Canute and his Courtiers.

Upon his royal throne he sate,
In a monarch's thoughtful mood:
Attendants on his regal state
His servile courtiers stood,
With foolish flatteries, false and vain,
To win his smile, his favour gain.

They told him e'en the mighty deep
His kingly sway confessed;
That he could bid its billows leap,
Or still its stormy breast.
He smiled contemptuously, and cried:
'Be then my boasted empire tried.'

Down to the ocean's sounding shore
The proud procession came,
To see its billows' wild uproar
King Canute's power proclaim;
Or at his high and dread command,
In gentle murmurs kiss the strand!

Not so thought he, their noble king,
As his course he seaward sped;
And each base slave, like a guilty thing,
Hung down his conscious head:
He knew the ocean's Lord on high!
They, that he scorned their senseless lie.

His throne was placed by ocean's side,
He lifted his sceptre there;
Bidding, with tones of kingly pride,
The waves their strife forbear:
And, while He spoke his royal will,
All but the winds and waves were still!

Louder the stormy blast swept by,
In scorn of his idle word;
The briny deep its waves tossed high,
By his mandates undeterred,
As threat'ning in their angry play,
To sweep both king and court away.

The monarch, with upbraiding look,
Turned to the courtly ring;
But none the kindling eye could brook
E'en of his *earthly* king;
For, in that wrathful glance, they see
A mightier Monarch wronged than he!

Bernard Barton.

mon'-arch, ruler.
at-tend'-ants, those waiting on.
re'-gal, kingly.
ser'-vile, slavish.
con-fessed', owned.
con-tempt'-u-ous-ly, scornfully.
pro-ces'-sion, march of the waves.
con'-scious, knowing, feeling.
scep'-tre, staff borne by a king as a sign of his power.
for-bear', cease, give up.
bri'-ny deep, the salt sea.
man'-dates, orders, commands.
un-de-terred', unhindered.
up-braid'-ing, chiding.
wrath'-ful, angry.

ANGLO-SAXON LINE RESTORED
1042–1066 A.D.

LESSON XXIV.

Edward the Confessor, 1042–1066 A.D.

1. Normandy, the country where Edward, the new king, had lived from his boyhood, was a fine large province in the north of France. Its people were the descendants of the famous sea-king *Rolf* and his followers, who had settled in it more than a hundred years before. The Normans, as they were called, had improved greatly in many ways since Rolf's time; and were now as different from their ancestors, as the smiling and fertile province of Normandy was different from their old rugged and ice-bound home in the north. They had given up their old language, and had learned to speak French, and were as accomplished in the arts of peace as they were brave and expert in war.

2. Having lived so long in Normandy, Edward was more like a Norman than an Englishman. When he came to England, therefore, he did not take well to the ways of the islanders, who were rough and uncouth compared with the polished and refined Normans. He therefore brought over from Normandy great numbers of his old friends, and placed them about his court, besides raising many others to high offices in church and state. This gave great offence to his English subjects; yet, in spite of

this, Edward was much beloved by them for his gentleness and goodness. He was, in fact, better suited to be a priest than a monarch, and liked better to visit the tombs of saints and collect relics than engage in great enterprises. On account of his piety, he was afterwards created a saint of the Roman Church, and surnamed the Confessor.

3. The real ruler of the land during the first half of Edward's reign was his father-in-law, the famous Godwin, Earl of Wessex. Like all other Englishmen, he was much displeased with the king for showing such favour to the Normans, and boldly spoke his mind to him about it. As may be supposed, the French friends of Edward both hated and feared Godwin, and did all they could to set the king against him. Once indeed they did succeed in getting him and his sons banished from the kingdom for a short time; but they were soon restored to favour again, and then it was the turn of their enemies to flee from the country.

4. During Earl Godwin's absence from the kingdom, King Edward had a remarkable visitor. This was his cousin, the famous Duke William of Normandy. During his stay, Edward treated him with great kindness, and on his departure, loaded him and his followers with gifts. It is said that during this visit, the king promised to leave the crown to William. Whether this was really so or not, William seems from that time to have set his mind upon becoming king of England some day.

5. On the death of Godwin, his son Harold succeeded to his estates and titles, and was the chief

man in England during the latter half of Edward's reign. During his last illness it is said that the king advised the Witan to choose Harold as his successor. Edward died at Christmas 1065, and was buried in the new Abbey of Westminster which he had built—the first of a long roll of kings and great men who have since been laid to rest in the same famous spot.

de-scend'-ants	**un-couth'**	**tombs**	**pi'-e-ty**
Rolf	**pol'-ished**	**col-lect'**	**Con-fes'-sor**
ex-pert'	**re-fined'**	**en-gage'**	**vis'-i-tor**
is'-land-ers	**of-fence'**	**en'-ter-pris-es**	**West'-min-ster**

pro'-vince, part of a kingdom or empire.
an'-ces-tors, forefathers.
ac-com'-plished, skilled.
rel'-ics, bones and other things belonging to a saint.
es-tates', lands.
ti'-tles, rank, honours.

LESSON XXV.

Harold, the Last of the Anglo-Saxon Kings, January to October 1066 A.D.

1. After the death of the Confessor, the council of the Wise Men, acting upon his dying advice, met, and chose Harold as king of England. Harold was not of the royal family, but he was by far the ablest Englishman of the time. For some years he had been the actual ruler of England, and had shown himself to be wise in peace and brave in war. So now that Edward was dead, and had left no son, and that Prince Edgar, the grandson of Ironside, was only a little boy, there was no one thought so fit as Harold to be chosen king.

2. When William, Duke of Normandy, heard that the English had made Harold king, he was very angry, for, as we have seen, he had expected that he would get the throne himself. He accordingly sent messengers to Harold, demanding that he should give up the crown, and reminding him of an oath he had taken some years before, when he was at the court of Normandy. Harold replied that the oath was not binding, as he had been *forced* to take it; and that, moreover, the English people had chosen him to be their king, and their king he would remain in spite of Duke William's threats.

3. William now prepared to invade England and take the crown by force. He employed workmen to build a numerous fleet of ships, and by the promise of great rewards when England should be conquered, he drew to his standard bands of adventurers from all parts of France. He also sent messengers to Rome to ask the blessing of the pope upon his enterprise; and he promised, if he should be successful, to make the English church more obedient to Rome. The pope was very gracious, and sent William a grand banner which he himself had blessed.

4. Meanwhile, Harold was not idle. He collected a large army in the south of England, and posted bodies of soldiers at various places where he thought William was most likely to land. The summer months, however, passed away, and still William came not. Many of Harold's men then returned to their homes to get in the harvest, as it was thought that the Normans would not come before the spring of the next year.

5. Just at this time, Harold had to meet a new enemy. His brother Tostig had turned traitor to him, and had allied himself with the king of Norway. The two, with their united forces, sailed up the Humber, and captured the city of York. As soon as Harold heard the news, he marched northward as quickly as possible with his own house-carls, and all the men he could muster. At Stamford Bridge, near York, he fell suddenly upon the Northmen, and completely defeated them. Tostig was slain. The giant king of Norway fell also; and thus, instead of gaining an English kingdom, he only got '*seven feet of earth for a grave.*'

Sept. 25, 1066 A.D.

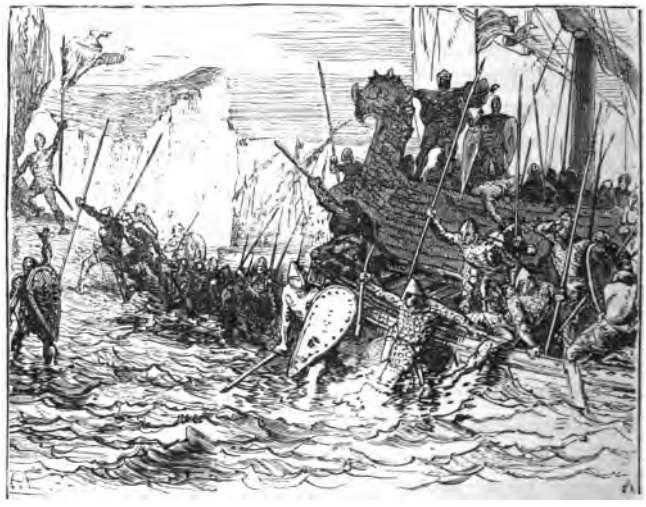
6. After his victory, Harold marched to York to rest his army. While he was sitting at a banquet with his nobles, the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard outside. The door was thrown open, and a messenger entered with the evil tidings that William and his Norman host had landed at Pevensey, on the shore of Sussex. Harold, nothing daunted, got his men together, and marched southwards with all speed. In a few days he was in London; and within a week after that he was posted on the famous hill of Senlac, within seven miles of the Norman army,

Sept. 29, 1066 A.D.

prepared to make a stand for his life, his crown, and his country.

coun'-cil	**em-ployed'**	**en'-ter-prise**	**gra'-cious**
ac-cord'-ing-ly	**nu'-mer-ous**	**suc-cess'-ful**	**Tos'-tig**
oath	**ad-ven'-tur-ers**	**o-be'-di-ent**	**Sen'-lac**

ban'-ner, battle-flag.
trait'-or, one who acts falsely, one who betrays another.
mus'-ter, gather together.
tí'-dings, news.
daunt'-ed, terrified.



The Landing of the Normans.

LESSON XXVI.

The Battle of Hastings, October 14, 1066 A.D.

1. It was the morning of battle. Knowing that the Norman knights were sheathed in armour and fought on horseback, while his own men were all on foot, Harold acted the part of a wise general

in posting his army on the brow of a hill, with woods and marshes on each side. To make his position still stronger, a barricade, made of earth, stones, and trunks of trees, had been raised in front, to break the charge of the Norman horsemen.

2. Right in the centre of the hill was pitched Harold's own standard—the figure of a Fighting Man, glittering with gold and precious stones. Floating by its side was the famous old Dragon banner of Wessex, which had waved over a thousand fields. Beneath and around, under Harold himself and his two brothers, were ranged the victors of Stamford Bridge, standing foot to foot and shoulder to shoulder, with shields close together—as gallant a band as ever defended hearth and home. Before the battle commenced, Harold went from rank to rank, encouraging his men to fight bravely, and charging them strictly *not to break away from their posts behind the fence,* and then victory would be certain.

3. Very soon the Norman host, which was three times as numerous as the English, was seen advancing to the attack. In front were the archers, carrying their bows and quivers. Behind them marched the heavily armed foot-soldiers, who were followed in turn by the knights who rode on horseback, and were sheathed from head to foot in armour. In the centre could be seen Duke William himself, mounted on a gallant charger. Riding by his side on a white horse was Bishop Odo, his half-brother, armed with a club, and wearing a coat of mail over his bishop's dress. In front of them was carried the banner which had been blessed by the pope.

4. Shouting their battle-cry of 'God help us!' the Norman archers rushed up the slope, and let fly their arrows as thick as hail. The English replied with cries of 'Holy Rood,' and hurled their spears and darts at the advancing foe. Under cover of the discharge of arrows, the heavily armed footmen of the Normans sprang forward to try and hew their way through the fence; while the mail-clad knights were pressing up behind, eager to charge through the ranks of the English, as soon as a passage was cleared for them. Then began the fierce 'hand-play.' Long and fiercely the Normans strove to break through the barricade; but in vain. Down went footmen and horsemen beneath the sweep of the terrible English battle-axes, which went crashing through helmets and shields and breastplates at every stroke; and all who tried to scale the rampart were soon stretched on the ground, to rise no more.

5. A cry then arose among the Normans that Duke William was slain, and they began to retreat down the hill. Some of the more eager of the English, forgetting Harold's caution, broke from their ranks in pursuit. It was at this trying moment that William showed himself a 'king of men.' Riding among his flying troops, he took off his helmet that his face might be seen, and cried out, 'I live, and by God's help I will yet conquer.' This had the effect of stopping the rout. The Normans rallied again, drove back their rash pursuers, and slew great numbers of them.

6. The Normans then made a second attempt to

force the English lines. In this charge, William himself displayed great valour, having three horses killed under him, and using his heavy iron mace with terrible effect. But in spite of all his efforts, the main body of the English still stood as firm as rocks, against which the angry waves spend their fury in vain.

7. In order to draw the English from their ranks, the crafty William now ordered his troops to *feign* a retreat. This succeeded. Many of the English, thinking that at last the day was surely theirs, rushed down the hill in pursuit, in spite of all Harold's attempts to prevent them. This was the turning-point of the battle. The Normans closed in upon them, put them to flight, and forced a way into the barricade. William also ordered his archers to shoot up in the air, so that their arrows might fall on the faces of the English, whose breasts were covered by their shields. This last device had a terrible effect; many a brave Englishman was shot through the head; Harold himself was pierced through the eye.

8. The struggle, however, was not yet entirely over. The English still continued to fight bravely in scattered groups, and especially round their king and standard. Every man of this gallant band sold his life dearly, and died the death of a hero. Thus fell the king's two faithful brothers; and thus, at last, covered with wounds, fell the mighty Harold himself, surrounded by heaps of Norman dead.

9. The battle had raged during the whole day; but, as the darkness closed in, the scattered remains

of the English army fled into the neighbouring woods, and the Normans were left masters of the field. In place of the Dragon and Fighting Man, the banner of Normandy now rustled in the breeze; and while the *last* of the old English kings lay dead upon the hill-side, the *first* of a new line was feasting among his nobles in a tent close by.

knights	**pitched**	**com-menced'**	**rout**
sheathed	**pre'-cious**	**ad-vanc'-ing**	**pur-suit'**
ar'-mour	**Drag'-on**	**stretched**	**scat'-tered**
pos-i'-tion	**gal'-lant**	**cau'-tion**	**sur-round'-ed**

bar'-ri-cade', a fence against an enemy, made of felled trees, stones, etc.
cen'-tre, middle.
qui'-ver, case for holding arrows.
hel'-mets, armour for the head.
breast'-plates, armour for the breast.
scale, mount a wall.
ral'-lied, began fighting vigorously again.
feign, pretend.

LESSON XXVII.

Condition of the English before the Norman Conquest.

1. The old English people were divided into three classes—the nobles, the churls, and the slaves. The *king* was, of course, the head of the nobles, and was chosen, as we have seen, by the *Witan*. Witan simply meant 'wise men.' This was at first an assembly of all the freemen of the country; but it was generally only the leading men of the country, such as the bishops and nobles, who attended. They usually met together three times a year, and assisted the king in framing laws and governing the country. The king's wife was called the *lady*.

2. The chief *nobles* were called aldermen (afterwards earls), who ruled over the different shires for the king, and in times of war led the fighting-men to battle. There was another class of nobles called *thanes*. At first, these were merely the king's *servants;* but as it was considered an honour to serve the king, the name thane, which means servant, became a title of honour. The officers appointed for carrying out the laws were called *reeves*. Hence we obtain our present name of shire-reeve or *sheriff*.

3. The *churls* held their land from the nobles, and were expected to follow them to battle when required. In towns, this class of people carried on a trade, or wrought at various handicrafts.

4. The lowest class was the *slaves* or thralls. Persons became slaves in two ways—either by being taken prisoners in war, or for committing some great crime. They generally wore a brass collar round the neck, which could not be removed without the use of a file. It had the owner's name engraved upon it. Slaves could be bought and sold like cattle. The chief market where this trade was carried on was Bristol; and it was in the west—in the counties bordering on Wales—where these serfs were most numerous. In some parts of England there were very few.

5. In times of peace, the nobles used to spend much of their time in the sports of *hunting* and *hawking*. In the numerous forests which then existed everywhere, there were plenty of animals for the chase, such as the wild boar and the deer; and the marshes afforded a good supply of herons

for those who were fond of flying falcons. The ladies spent much of their spare time in spinning and making the cloth for their lords' garments.

6. The dwellings, even of the upper classes, were of a very poor kind. The chief room was the great hall, where the master and guests and servants used to assemble when not occupied out of doors. Round the walls were hung weapons of war and the chase. Along the whole length of the apartment ran a table, in shape like the letter T, and formed of rough planks. At the upper or cross part of this table sat the lord and his guests, while the lower part was taken by the various servants. A large salt-cellar in the middle of the table separated the meaner sort of guests from their betters. At each end of the apartment were huge open fireplaces, the chimneys to which were so badly built, that much of the smoke found its way into the room, the beams and rafters of which were covered with a thick coating of soot. The rooms set apart for the ladies of the family were furnished with a greater degree of comfort; but even in these, so bad were the walls, that gusts of wind often found their way through the crevices, and shook the tapestry with which the apartments were hung.

7. At meal-times, servants went round, and presented the various joints on spits, from which each guest cut what he wanted. The fragments of the feast were thrown to the dogs underneath the table. After the meal, drinking was often carried on to a late hour; and the islanders were frequently reproached for their rough ways by the Normans

and the more refined people of the Continent. Yet the old English were not altogether a rude people. They loved poetry, music, and painting. In the evening the harp was passed round, and everybody was expected to take his turn in playing upon it.

8. The chief wealth of the Anglo-Saxons consisted in numerous herds of cattle and swine, which were tended by the slaves in the woods and pastures. The ground was tilled to some extent, but all the farming work was done in a rough and ready way, that would afford amusement to the dullest ploughboy nowadays. Commerce was carried on to a certain extent with the Continent; but it must be admitted that our forefathers gave no promise in those days that the English would in the course of time become the foremost trading people on the face of the globe.

9. The noble language of the old English people still forms the bulk of our everyday speech, and is now spoken by millions of people on far-away continents of which our ancestors had never heard.

con-di'-tion	**thralls**	**her'-ons**	**chim'-neys**
thanes	**com-mit'-ting**	**fal'-cons**	**fur'-nished**
reeves	**bor'-der-ing**	**as-sem'-ble**	**de-gree'**
sher'-iff	**sup-ply'**	**oc'-cu-pied**	**pas'-tures**

hand'-i-craft, work done with the hand.
en-graved', cut out.
raf'-ters, beams that keep up the roof of a house.
crev'-i-ces, openings.
a-part'-ment, a room.
spits, iron prongs for roasting meat on.
re-proached', blamed.
com'-merce, trade with other countries.

Hawk'-ing.—At that time there were no guns with which to shoot wild-fowl. So the nobles kept hawks and falcons, which they brought up and trained to fly after herons and other birds, and to kill them.

THE NORMAN KINGS,
1066–1154 A.D.

LESSON XXVIII.

William the Conqueror, 1066 to 1087 A.D.

1. William began his reign well, and did all he could to gain the good-will of his new subjects. He had tried hard to persuade them that he had more right to the throne than Harold; and perhaps he thought now that all things would go on quietly. It was not long, however, before he found out his mistake. During a visit which he paid to Normandy, his followers who remained behind in England were guilty of so many acts of oppression and cruelty, that risings began to take place in different parts of the country, and it was five years before he was able to subdue all the land, and call himself the *real* king of England.

2. In putting down these revolts, William acted with much sternness and cruelty. On one occasion, after defeating those who had risen against him in the north, he was guilty of a deed which has left a lasting stain upon his character. He carried fire and sword through the whole country between York and Durham. Lands were laid waste, towns and villages burnt, and the inhabitants either slain or driven out. For many years afterwards, the whole district was a wilderness, with scarcely a

house or a human being to be seen in it. Such was the cruel '*Harrying of the North.*'

3. The Englishman who gave William the most trouble was the renowned *Hereward the Wake.* Hereward built a wooden fort in the Isle of Ely, which got the name of the *Camp of Refuge.* Here he drew to himself a band of hardy followers, and long defied William's power, and it was with great difficulty that he was at last overcome. What became of Hereward is uncertain. Some say that he became William's friend, and lived at peace for the rest of his days; others, that he was slain by the Normans after making a brave defence against great odds.

4. An act which raised the anger of the English against William, was the making of the New Forest in Hampshire. Like all the Normans, he dearly loved the chase. In order, therefore, that he might have a hunting park near to the royal palace, he laid waste all the country lying between Winchester and the sea; and numerous families who had dwelt there for generations were driven out to find homes elsewhere. A cruel law was also made that any one caught killing a deer should have his eyes torn out. Nothing that the Normans did caused so much ill-feeling as this; and when, afterwards, William Rufus met his death in the New Forest, men said it was the judgment of heaven on his father's tyranny.

5. The latter years of William's reign were not happy. He had to mourn the death of his wife Matilda, of whom he had been very fond. She had also been very proud of her powerful husband,

and it is said that the famous *Bayeux Tapestry* was wrought by her needle. From the pictures on this tapestry, we get much of our information about

Norman Ladies at Work.

the battle of Hastings, and the events connected with it.

6. Another cause of grief to William was the disobedient conduct of his eldest son Robert, who wished to be made Duke of Normandy before his

father's death. His request being refused by the Conqueror, with the remark that it was not his custom 'to put off his clothes till he went to bed,' Robert left the court, and made war against his father in Normandy.

7. The king of France, who was jealous of William's great power, secretly encouraged Robert in his conduct. This at last led to a war between the two countries, and William invaded France with a large army. He had set fire to one of the French towns, and was riding about gazing on the scene, when his steed, treading upon some hot ashes, started, and flung its rider heavily forward against the pommel of the saddle. The hurt thus received led to a fever, of which William died shortly afterwards.

op-pres'-sion	**wil'-der-ness**	**gen-er-a'-tions**	**con-nect'-ed**
sub-due'	**har'-ry-ing**	**judg'-ment**	**dis-o-be'-di-ent**
oc-ca'-sion	**re-nowned'**	**Ba-yeux** (-yoo')	**se'-cret-ly**
char'-ac-ter	**Her'-e-ward**	**tap'-es-try**	**en-cour'-aged**

Wake, Watchful.
tyr'-an-ny, hard rule, despotism.
pom'-mel, knob in front of a saddle.

Bayeux, a town in Normandy, where the tapestry may still be seen.

LESSON XXIX.

Domesday Book and the Feudal System.

1. In the British Museum in London there is to be seen one of the oldest and most curious books possessed by any nation. The leaves are not made of paper, but of vellum, and the writing is in Latin. This famous book is as old as the time of William

the Conqueror, who caused it to be written. It was named by the Normans the *Roll of Winchester*, because it was kept in that city; but the English called it *Domesday Book*.

2. In Domesday Book are recorded the names of the Norman barons and bishops among whom the English lands were divided; the size of their estates, and a full account of them—whether ploughed lands or pasture, wood or waste; what mills or fisheries there were, and each farmer's stock of cows, sheep, or swine; besides many other particulars. From this book, we glean much of our knowledge of those times.

3. All the barons held their lands from the king, and in return were bound to pay him homage as their lord, and furnish men to assist him in war. The barons again divided their estates among *their* vassals, who engaged to serve them in the same way. And thus the system went on down the scale, from the king as the head of all, to the lowest tenant who held land. When the king needed an army, he sent a summons to the barons; the barons called upon their retainers; and they again upon their followers; and thus a large army was collected. This was called the *feudal system*, and the feudal times lasted in England about four hundred years—that is, until the time of the Tudors. It was in connection with this system that William made his *Great Survey* of the land, the account of which is written down in Domesday Book.

4. When he had completed Domesday Book, William called all his nobles to a Great Council at

Salisbury. From all parts of England came the barons and abbots, with a great number of armed followers. In all, about sixty thousand persons were present at this imposing muster. It took place on Salisbury Plain; and all those who had received grants of land from William swore that they would serve him as their feudal lord. 1086 A.D.

5. The Normans are also said to have introduced the *curfew bell* into England. It was rung every evening at eight o'clock, as a signal that all fires and lights were to be put out. The English looked upon it as a very harsh measure; for, like their descendants of to-day, they could not bear any meddling with their home affairs. In some old churches the custom is still kept up, and every evening

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.

cu'-ri-ous	**par-tic'-u-lars**	**feud'-al**	**fol'-low-ers**
pos-sessed'	**glean**	**com-plet'-ed**	**sig'-nal**
fish'-er-ies	**know'-ledge**	**Salis'-bur-y**	**med'-dling**

vel'-lum, calf's skin used for writing on.
re-cord'-ed, written.
sys'-tem, plan, method.
ten'-ant, one who holds lands or houses from another.
sum'-mons, call, order.
re-tain'-ers, those connected with a feudal lord, his servants and attendants.
sur'-vey, inspection.
im-pos'-ing, grand, striking.

The **Brit'-ish Mu-se'-um** is a large building in London full of curious and interesting things.

Domes'-day Book.—This book was probably so called because *doom* or decision was given from it, whenever there was any dispute about land or property. In Old English, doom was the common word for a judgment or decision in a court of law.

Cur'-few, from the French *couvre-feu* (cover-fire), the fires being *covered up* for the night when the bell rang.

LESSON XXX.

William the Red (Rufus), 1087-1100 A.D.

1. The second William was surnamed Rufus, or the Red, from the colour of his hair and complexion. Of all the Conqueror's sons, he had been the most obedient during his father's lifetime. It was his father's wish that he should succeed to the English throne; and he at once rushed off to take possession of it, before the indolent Robert could take any steps to set aside his father's will.

2. As long as he was in fear of an invasion by Robert, William, with his usual cunning, made all kinds of fine promises to the English to gain their help; but as soon as he had succeeded in duping his brother, and had got him to rest satisfied with Normandy, he began to show his real character. He was mean, crafty, and cruel, and let nothing stand in the way of gaining his ends. It may truly be said of him, that 'he feared not God, neither regarded man.' The other Norman kings showed respect for the church, but William was a tyrant to church and people alike, and so long as he got money to supply his wicked needs, he cared for nothing else.

3. He also cast a greedy eye on Robert's dominion of Normandy, and tried in every way to get possession of it. Robert, who wished to join the first crusade, did innocently put him in possession of it *for five years*, for a sum of money. Before Robert's return, William was dead. While hunting in the New

Forest, he was killed by an arrow. Whether his death was due to accident or design, no one could tell; and he was laid in his grave unregretted either by Norman or Englishman.

4. The reign of Rufus is chiefly worth recording as being the time when the famous wars called *Crusades* first commenced. As we have seen in the case of Canute, the people of those times were fond of making pilgrimages to holy places, thinking that by so doing, they atoned for the sins of their past lives. The most celebrated place that could be visited in this way was Jerusalem, which contained the Tomb where our Saviour had been buried. Pilgrims of all classes, and from all the western countries of Europe, were in the habit of making journeys to this holy shrine. **1096 A.D.**

5. A few years before this, however, the Turks in their conquests had overrun the Holy Land and taken possession of Jerusalem, and pilgrims had to undergo much ill-treatment at their hands. On returning home, these pilgrims complained loudly of this bad usage, and the famous *Peter the Hermit* went from court to court stirring up kings and nobles to go forth and deliver Jerusalem out of the hands of the unbelieving Turks.

6. Thus it was that armies made up of troops of all nations set forth at various times to undertake the conquest of Palestine. These wars were called Crusades, and several English princes, as we shall see, took part in them. Robert was on his return to England, when he heard that his brother Rufus was dead. On getting home he found himself again too

late. Henry, his younger brother, taking advantage of his absence, had seized the throne of England.

col'-our	**sat'-is-fied**	**do-min'-ion**	**com-plained'**
com-plex'-ion	**char'-ac-ter**	**com-menced'**	**us'-age**
pos-ses'-sion	**ty'-rant**	**Jer-u'-sa-lem**	**un-be-liev'-ing**

in'-do-lent, lazy.
du'-ping, deceiving.
craft'-y, cunning.
re-gard'-ed, cared for.
un-re-gret'-ted, not lamented.
cel'-e-brat-ed, famous.
shrine, a holy place, a place where sacred things are kept.

Cru-sades'.—Crusade means war of the cross. The warriors who fought in them bore on their dress a figure of the cross.

LESSON XXXI.

The Crusaders' War-song.

Chieftains, lead on! our hearts beat high;
Lead on to Salem's towers!
Who would not deem it bliss to die,
Slain in a cause like ours?
The brave who sleep in soil of thine,
Die not entombed, but shrined, O Palestine!

Souls of the slain in holy war!
Look from your sainted rest:
Tell us ye rose in Glory's car,
To mingle with the blest;
Tell us how short the death-pang's power,
How bright the joys of your immortal bower.

Strike the loud harp, ye minstrel train!
Pour forth your loftiest lays;
Each heart shall echo to the strain
Breathed in the warrior's praise.

Bid every string triumphant swell
The inspiring sounds that heroes love so well.

Leaders of the First Crusade.

Salem ! amidst the fiercest hour,
  The wildest rage of fight,
Thy name shall lend our falchions power,
  And nerve our hearts with might.

Envied be those for thee that fall,
Who find their graves beneath thy sacred wall.

For them no need that sculptured tomb
Should chronicle their fame,
Or pyramid record their doom,
Or deathless verse their name;
It is enough that dust of thine
Should shroud their forms, O blessed Palestine!

Chieftains, lead on! our hearts beat high
For combat's glorious hour;
Soon shall the red-cross banner fly
On Salem's loftiest tower!
We burn to mingle in the strife,
Where *but* to die insures eternal life.

Mrs Hemans.

chief'-tains **im-mor'-tal** **bow'-er** **ech'-o**

tri-umph'-ant, with feeling of victory.
in-spir'-ing, filling with zeal and courage.
fal'-chions, swords.
nerve, give strength to.
sculp'-tured, adorned with carved figures.
chron'-i-cle, write in a chronicle or history.
pyr'-a-mid, a large and grand monument like one of the pyramids in Egypt.
death'-less, that will live for ever.
shroud, cover as with a grave-cloth.

Sa'-lem, Jerusalem, where the Saviour was crucified. The object of the Crusades was to recover Jerusalem from the Turks and other unbelievers.

Not en-tombed', but shrined.—Not buried in an ordinary grave, but laid in a sacred place; the soil of Palestine being regarded as holy ground.

Red-cross.—These Crusaders had the figure of a cross in white or red or other colour on their war-flags as well as on their cloaks and shields. A very famous order of crusading knights, the Templars, wore a red cross wrought in their white mantles.

LESSON XXXII.

Henry I. (Beauclerc), 1100–1135 A.D.

1. Henry I., the youngest son of the Conqueror, was surnamed Beauclerc, or the Good Scholar, on account of his learning. He translated *Æsop's Fables* out of Greek into English, which was a remarkable thing to do in those days, when most of the kings and their nobles could barely sign their own names. Of all the Norman kings, Henry was most liked by the English. He had been born in the country, and therefore he used to boast that he was an Englishman, and had a better right to the throne than his brothers. He was guilty of some cruel actions during his reign, but on the whole he was a great king, and under him the English were not so badly treated as they had been in the time of Rufus and his father.

2. His brother, whose place he had unlawfully taken, was on his way from the Holy Land, and Henry felt that though Robert was one of the most easy and good-natured of princes, yet it was not likely he would submit quietly to be kept out of his rights a second time. Henry therefore strove to get the English on his side by promising to abolish the Dane-geld and the curfew, and to rule according to the good old laws of Edward the Confessor. But what pleased the English most was his marriage with Maude, the daughter of Margaret of Scotland. This princess could trace her descent from Alfred and the old English kings.

3. Robert did indeed land in England with an army, but he was easily persuaded to remain satisfied with Normandy and a sum of money, and thus no war took place on English ground. After the meeting at which this was settled, Robert paid a lengthened visit to his brother before returning home, and on this occasion they dwelt together on most friendly terms.

4. This friendship, however, did not last long on Henry's side. He wished to have Normandy as well as England. Robert was too idle a prince to govern his dominions properly, and when the Normans saw how much better things went on in England, some of them applied to Henry for aid. He was not long in picking a quarrel with his brother, and, having done so, invaded Normandy with a large army, consisting mainly of English, who longed for a chance to wipe out the memory of their defeat at Hastings. In a great battle the Normans were completely defeated, and Robert was taken prisoner.

Battle of Tenchebrai, 1106 A.D.

5. The unfortunate prince was confined in the distant castle of Cardiff in South Wales, where he remained till his death, which did not take place till nearly thirty years afterwards. By degrees, Henry got all Normandy into his grasp. But in the height of his power and fame came the awful tidings that his son—his only son—William, whom he loved, had been drowned in crossing the Channel. Then the poor lonely prisoner in the far-away castle of Cardiff, was not so unhappy as this great king upon his throne.

6. Towards the latter end of his reign, Henry tried to insure the crown for his daughter Maude, by getting the barons, with her cousin Stephen at their head, to take an oath to support her. Maude had married for her second husband, Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou. In the course of time, a young prince was born, and named Henry after his grandfather. This prince, as we shall see, afterwards became the first king of the famous Plantagenet line.

Beau'(*bo*)**-clerc**	**de-scent'**	**ap-plied'**	**cous'-in**
Æ'-sop	**length'-ened**	**mem'-o-ry**	**hus'-band**
re-mark'-a-ble	**oc-ca'-sion**	**de-grees'**	**Geof'-frey**
boast	**friend'-ship**	**Car'-diff**	**Plan-ta'-gen-et**

ab-ol'-ish, put an end to. | **in-sure'**, make sure.

Maude.—Maude's mother, Margaret, was the sister of Edgar Atheling, who, after the death of Harold, was chosen king by the English, but who reigned only for a few days. She was married to the king of Scotland.

LESSON XXXIII.

He never smiled again.

[It is said of Henry I., that after the death of his son, Prince William, who perished in a shipwreck off the coast of Normandy, he was never seen to smile.]

The bark that held a prince went down,
The sweeping waves rolled on;
And what was England's glorious crown
To him that wept a son?
He lived—for life may long be borne
Ere sorrow break its chain;

Why comes not death to those who mourn?
He never smiled again!

There stood proud forms around his throne,
The stately and the brave;
But who could fill the place of one—
That one beneath the wave?
Before him passed the young and fair,
In Pleasure's reckless train;
But seas dashed o'er his son's bright hair—
He never smiled again!

He sat where festal bowls went round;
He heard the minstrel sing;
He saw the tourney's victor crowned
Amidst the knightly ring:
A murmur of the restless deep
Was blent with every strain,
A voice of winds that would not sleep—
He never smiled again!

Hearts, in that time, closed o'er the trace
Of vows once fondly poured,
And strangers took the kinsman's place
At many a joyous board;
Graves, which true love had bathed with tears,
Were left to heaven's bright rain;
Fresh hopes were born for other years—
He never smiled again!

Mrs Hemans.

bark, boat, ship.
state'-ly, tall.
reck'-less, careless.
fest'-al, used at feasts.
tour'-ney, games in which knights, usually mounted on horseback, performed exercises of skill.
board, table.

LESSON XXXIV.

Stephen, and how he kept his Oath, 1135–1154 A.D.

1. As soon as Henry was dead, Stephen quickly broke the oath which he had taken to support Maude. In those feudal times, it was thought disgraceful for a woman to be head of the nation, and thus Stephen got the support of the barons. He was a brave man, and popular amongst the people, and, had he been the rightful heir, would have made a good king. But Maude was not the woman to submit to have her claims thus set aside, and accordingly a civil war was the result.

2. David, king of Scotland, led an army into England in support of Maude's claim, but he was totally defeated in the great battle of the Standard. The war went on for several years, first one side gaining the victory and then the other; and during all this time the country was in a state of greater confusion and misery than had ever been the case since the coming of the Danes in the time of Ethelred the Unready. 1138 A.D.

3. At the battle of Lincoln, Stephen was taken prisoner, and Maude became queen for a short time. But her haughty ways so displeased the people, that she was soon compelled to flee, and Stephen regained his liberty. At last, after many years of fighting, an agreement was come to, by which Stephen was to remain king as long as he lived, but after that, the throne was to go to Maude's son, Prince Henry,

of whom we heard in Lesson XXXII. Shortly afterwards, Stephen died, and with him ended the Norman line of kings.

4. In this reign a great number of feudal castles were built all over England. So lawless were the times, that the barons who dwelt in them, plundered and ill-treated the unhappy people around in the most dreadful manner, and it was a common saying among the people, that Christ and his saints were asleep.

dis-grace'-ful	**right'-ful**	**Lin'-coln**	**com-pelled'**
pop'-u-lar	**civ'-il**	**haught'-y**	**a-gree'-ment**

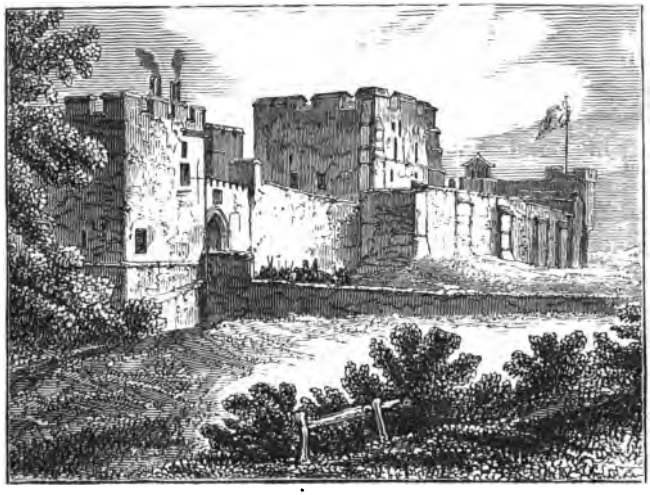
LESSON XXXV.

Norman Life in England.

1. In the feudal times the great barons built strong stone castles, with thick high walls, and surrounded by a deep *moat*. The strongest part of the building was the *keep*, in which the baron and his family dwelt. The entrance to the castle was by a narrow bridge across the moat. It was called the *drawbridge*, and could be drawn up or let down at pleasure. Close to the castle were the dwellings of the various craftsmen, who supplied the nobles' and their followers with such things as they required. The barons dwelt in their castles like so many petty kings, doing pretty much as they pleased. In those days, the king, who lived far away at London or Winchester, seldom heard of the doings of his vassals.

2. The Normans introduced their own speech, and thus two languages were spoken in England for a

long time. French was the tongue used in everything in which the despised English had no share. It was heard in the battle-field, in the chase, and at the banquet; in the services of the church; in the courts of justice; and in the schools where the sons



Norman Castle, Carlisle.

of the nobles received their instruction. The Anglo-Saxon speech was left to churls and villeins; or, at the best, to those country gentlemen who were still proud of their descent from the old English race.

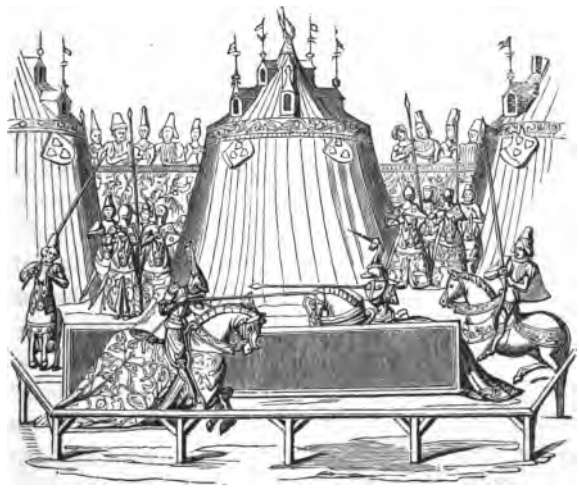
3. The rank to which most noble Norman youths aspired was that of *knighthood*. Before they could be admitted into this order, they generally had to pass through the lower grades of *pages* and *esquires*. No one could be knighted who had been guilty of

cowardice, or any baseness; and when once the *golden spurs* were buckled on, the newly-made knight was pledged to bear himself bravely in the fight; to be mindful of his religious duties; and to defend the weak and the oppressed. When fully equipped for battle, the knight was clothed from head to foot in mail. Round his neck was slung his shield, which bore his motto or device. He was armed with a long lance or spear, besides sword and dagger; and frequently, also, a battle-axe was slung at his saddle-bow.

4. The holiday costume of a gentleman consisted of a loose garment reaching to the knee, and secured round the waist with a richly embroidered belt. Over this was a short cloak trimmed with fur. The bonnet was of velvet, and the boots were turned up at the toes like the horns of a ram. The ladies wore an under-robe of silk, over which was a loose mantle reaching to the ground.

5. The chief sports of the Normans were hunting, hawking, and tilting. Whenever there was a tilting-match, or *tournament*, crowds of people of both sexes flocked to see it, much as people do when a great cricket-match or horse-race takes place nowadays. The tilting consisted in the knights riding against each other at full speed with lances laid in rest, each trying to unhorse the other. This kind of sport was very dangerous, but it suited the taste of the times. Even the ladies in the galleries frequently encouraged the champions by clapping their hands, or waving their handkerchiefs. The lower classes had archery contests, or bouts at quarter-staff.

6. In eating and drinking, the Normans were much more temperate than the English, and paid more attention to those little graces of life which dis-



Tournament.—From an old Print.

tinguish the gentleman from the boor. They were fond of music; and after the banquet was over, had pleasure in listening to the minstrel, who, to the strains of the harp, sang of brave and noble deeds.

sur-round'-ed	**fol'-low-ers**	**re-lig'-ious**	**trimmed**
draw'-bridge	**knight'-hood**	**mot'-to**	**tour'-na-ment**
crafts'-men	**es-quires'**	**de-vice'**	**boor**

moat, a deep ditch.
cos-tume', dress.
em-broid'-ered, adorned with needlework.

Vil'-leins, farm-servants, from *villa*, the Latin name for a farm.
Quar'-ter-staff, a game played with a pole about eight feet long. It was grasped by both hands in the middle, and twirled rapidly about, either to strike the adversary or ward off his blow.

THE EARLY PLANTAGENETS, 1154–1327 A.D.

LESSON XXXVI.

Henry II. and Thomas à Becket, 1154–1170 A.D.

Possessions in France of the House of Anjou. Shown in the tinted portion.

1. The new king, Henry of the *Broomplant*, proved himself a wise and able ruler. He hated disorder and broken laws, and at once set to work with great energy to put things to rights. The poor English, also, who had been so much despised ever since the Conquest, began to have happier times, and receive better treatment; and thus the new king won the respect of all his subjects. Henry was not only powerful in England; a large part of the west and south of France belonged to him; and altogether he was one of the greatest kings of that time.

2. In the early years of his reign, Henry had for his friend and adviser the famous *Thomas à Becket.* Becket was a fine, handsome man, of very pleasing manners. He was accomplished in all outdoor sports, such as hunting, hawking, and tilting, and was distinguished as a brave knight on the field of battle. He was, besides, one of the cleverest and most learned men of the time. So he was fitted in every way to be the companion and friend of the king. Henry valued his friendship very highly, and presented him with many rich estates. Becket spent his wealth in a princely style. Hundreds of persons, from noblemen down to the very poor, were feasted in his halls every day, and often the king himself was his guest. But this fair friendship did not last.

3. Henry had sore disputes with the clergy about their duties. He said they claimed too much power. He therefore resolved to make several changes in the church laws. But he knew the bishops would not let him do this if they could help it; so some such thought as this came into his head: 'If only my friend Becket were Archbishop of Canterbury instead of Theobald, he would help me to carry out all my wishes.' Accordingly, when Theobald died, the king offered the post of archbishop to Becket. Becket did not wish for the honour, as he knew he could not act so as to keep the king's favour, but at last he was persuaded to accept it.

4. As soon as he became archbishop, Becket's conduct underwent a great change. He gave up all his grand ways, wore sackcloth next his skin, partook of nothing but the meanest food, and daily washed the

feet of a number of poor beggars, and waited upon them at table. He became the champion of the church, and instead of helping the king in his plans, he opposed him all he could.

5. Henry was greatly disappointed in his old favourite, and his friendship for him began to turn to hatred. At a great meeting held at **1164 A.D.** *Clarendon*, for the purpose of settling the dispute, Becket showed himself so haughty and so unwilling to yield, that the king became very angry, and from this time all friendship between them was at an end. Not long afterwards, Becket was obliged to flee to France, to avoid the king's anger. During his absence, Henry got the other bishops to carry out his wishes.

6. At the end of seven years, Becket was allowed to return to Canterbury. He was received with great rejoicings by the poorer classes of the people, by whom he was much liked, both on account of his former kindness to them, and also because he was by birth a Saxon. He soon showed, however, that banishment from home had not broken his proud spirit. He at once began to put things as they had been before he went away, and punished those bishops and others who had taken the king's side.

7. When Henry, who was then in France, was told of the archbishop's doings, he angrily exclaimed: '*Have I no one about me to rid me of this troublesome priest?*' Four knights, who heard this speech, instantly set out for Canterbury, and thrust themselves rudely into the archbishop's presence. He read death in their fierce glances, but calmly went

to the cathedral to offer up evening prayer. Thither the four ruffians followed him, and cruelly murdered him on the steps of the altar. 1170 A.D.

8. When Henry heard of it, he was much shocked, as he had never really wished any one to act upon his rash words. He knew quite well that this would do harm to his cause. And so it happened; for people now looked upon Becket as a martyr, and the church created him a saint. Some time afterwards, Henry made a journey barefooted to the tomb of his former friend and companion, and suffered the monks to scourge him with knotted cords, as a punishment for speaking those rash words which had led to the deed of blood.

dis-or'-der	**ad-vis'-er**	**The'-o-bald**	**ban'-ish-ment**
en'-er-gy	**Thom'-as à Beck'-et**	**ac-cept'**	**mar'-tyr**
de-spised'	**dis-tin'-guished**	**Clar'-en-don**	**scourge**
re-spect'	**com-pan'-ion**	**re-joic'-ings**	**knot'-ted**

val'-ued, prized.
cham'-pi-on, defender.
ex-claimed', cried out.
cath-e'-dral, a large church.

Broom-plant.—The broom was the badge of Henry's father. From the French name of the broom they got the name of Plantagenet.

LESSON XXXVII.

The Conquest of Ireland, 1171–1172 A.D.

1. On one occasion, while Henry was staying in France, a strange visitor came to see him. The stranger's name was *Dermot*, and he had once been king over that portion of Ireland called Leinster. He had been driven away from his country, however, by some of the petty kings who ruled in other

parts of Ireland. He therefore came to Henry to ask his help in getting back his kingdom. Henry was too busily engaged in other matters just then to undertake such a task, but he gave Dermot leave to visit England to see if any of the barons, who were spending their time idly in their castles, would help him.

2. Dermot accordingly went among the nobles in the west of England, and at last persuaded Richard, surnamed *Strongbow*, and a few more knights with their followers, to accompany him to Ireland. As a reward for their help, he promised that Strongbow should marry his daughter and become king after him, and the others should receive gifts of land. The Norman knights, clad as they were in mail, and well armed, easily defeated the enemies of Dermot, who were nearly half-naked, and armed only with short swords or hatchets. Dermot died shortly afterwards, and Strongbow became king of Leinster.

3. Henry did not intend, however, to allow any one to become king in Ireland but himself; so, before long, he crossed over St George's Channel with an army, and soon forced both Strongbow and the petty Irish princes to submit to him as their master. After a stay of a few months, he returned to England again, leaving one of his nobles to rule over Ireland in his place. This event has been called the *Conquest of Ireland*, but the country was not really conquered until a long time afterwards; and indeed, from that time to this, the Irish people have never been happy and contented like the English, Scotch, and Welsh.

4. Some years afterwards, Henry sent his youngest son John to be Lord of Ireland, hoping in this way to provide a kingdom for him. But, as we shall see further on, John was just the sort of prince to lose a kingdom rather than to keep one. He deeply offended the Irish chieftains by his foolish conduct. He and his young courtiers used to make sport of them by pulling their beards and scoffing at their manners; so John did not remain long in the new kingdom which his warlike father had provided for him.

5. The latter years of Henry's life, like the latter years of William the Conqueror, were made unhappy by the bad conduct of his sons, who made war against him in France. The chief offender in this respect was Richard; but even John's name was found among the list of rebels, and he had been his father's favourite. The old king died almost broken-hearted, and Richard bitterly reproached himself with being the cause of his father's death. **1189 A.D.**

vis'-i-tor	**Strong'-bow**	**pro-vide'**	**beards**
Der'-mot	**ac-com'-pan-y**	**of-fend'-ed**	**reb'-els**
Lein'-ster	**hatch-ets**	**chief'-tains**	**fa'-vour-ite**
en-gaged'	**Chan'-nel**	**cour'-tiers**	**re-proached'**

LESSON XXXVIII.

Richard of the Lion Heart (Cœur de Lion), 1189-1199 A.D.

1. Richard I. was surnamed the Lion Heart on account of his great courage. He was very tall and strong, and was of so bold and fearless a nature, that he thought nothing of matching himself against great

odds; and no knight, either in England or elsewhere, was ever known to cope with him successfully in single combat. In those times, when a king was thought little of unless he was brave and warlike, Richard had become very famous on account of his daring exploits.

2. When he became king of England, the *Third Crusade* was just about to begin, and Richard was eager to win for himself more glory, by driving the unbelievers out of the Holy Land, and planting the banner of England upon the towers of Jerusalem. He therefore got money from his subjects in every possible way, and collected a large army, with which he set out for the Holy Land, being joined on the way by Philip of France and other princes who were also engaged in this Crusade.

3. Arrived in Palestine, Richard soon distinguished himself above all the other leaders by his skill and valour. Whenever towns were taken, or battles fought, he was the foremost man. The other princes grew jealous of his fame, and he was greatly disliked by them on account of his haughty and fiery temper. He grossly insulted Leopold, Duke of Austria, on one occasion, by plucking down that prince's banner from the walls of a city they had captured, and exclaiming: 'Who has dared to place this paltry rag beside the banner of England?'

4. Before long, therefore, both Philip of France and Leopold of Austria returned home, and Richard was left to finish the Crusade alone. But his army was now too small for the purpose; and after getting almost within sight of

Jerusalem, he was obliged to give up all thoughts of going any farther. It is said that on being forced to turn back, he shed tears of bitter disappointment. For long years afterwards, the people of Palestine remembered the terrible name of '*Richard*,' and the wonderful deeds of valour which he had performed.

5. On his voyage home, Richard had the misfortune to be wrecked and cast ashore on the Austrian coast. Knowing that he had made Leopold his enemy, he tried to make his way overland in the disguise of a merchant; but at last people found out who he was, and he was thrown into prison. He remained there for more than a year, and was not set free till the English had paid a large sum of money for his ransom.

6. Richard was gladly received by his subjects in England, but he only stayed amongst them a few months. The remainder of his life was spent in France, where he was nearly always at war with Philip. While laying siege to a castle, he was wounded by an arrow. Before he died, the archer who shot the arrow was brought into his presence, and Richard was so much struck with his bold replies that he generously forgave him. Thus the last act of his life was really one of the greatest victories he had ever won, for nothing is nobler than to '*forgive your enemies.*'

Rich'-ard	**suc-cess'-ful-ly**	**jeal'-ous**	**re-mem'-bered**
cour'-age	**un-be-liev'-ers**	**Le'-o-pold**	**pres'-ence**
match'-ing	**dis-tin'-guished**	**oc-ca'-sion**	**gen'-er-ous-ly**

cope, meet in fight.
com'-bat, fight.
ex-ploits', great and brave deeds.
pal'-try, mean, trifling.
dis-ap-point'-ment, vexation.
re-main'-der, rest.

LESSON XXXIX.

King John and Magna Charta, 1199-1216 A.D.

1. John was a bad king in every way. He was cruel and greedy, untruthful, boastful and cowardly. In the beginning of his reign, he was guilty of the murder of his nephew, Arthur, who was the son of his elder brother, and therefore the rightful heir to the throne. This led to a war with France, and in a very short time, John lost Normandy and most of the other provinces which had belonged to his father.

1204 A.D.

2. At home, he oppressed his subjects in various ways in order to obtain money, and treated those who opposed his wishes with great cruelty. He had a quarrel with the pope, and refused for a long time to accept *Stephen Langton* as archbishop, yet when the pope threatened him with an invasion by the French to take away his crown, he humbled himself to the dust, and granted all the pope's demands.

3. The people bore with John's bad ways for a long time, but at last they resolved to put a check upon his actions by making him sign a *Great Charter*, which would bind him to rule justly for the future. The great barons, headed by Stephen Langton the Archbishop of Canterbury, took the lead, and all the people joyfully supported them. When John first heard of their intentions, he flew into a great rage; but finding the barons were determined, he changed his manner, and fixed a day for meeting them and

signing the Charter. In his heart, he expected to get a number of hired soldiers from abroad before the appointed day; but in this he was disappointed;

King John and the Magna Charta.

they did not arrive in time. He was therefore obliged to meet the barons according to promise.

4. The meeting took place in a meadow on the south bank of the Thames, at a place called *Runnymede*. It was a bright June day when John,

accompanied by a few of the nobles, rode down to the place from the neighbouring Castle of Windsor. The barons with their followers, all completely armed, were there before him; and John at once saw, as he glanced his eye from rank to rank of stern determined men, that no trifling would be allowed. When the famous roll of parchment was spread out before him, and read over, he did not waste any time, but carelessly took up the pen and signed it, and then affixed his seal to it. His heart, however, was full of rage; and as soon as he got back to the castle, he threw himself on the floor, and gave vent to his anger in terrible oaths and threats.

5. Thus was signed the celebrated *Magna Charta*. Like Domesday Book, the famous scroll may still be seen in the British Museum in London. It is somewhat stained by time, but the writing upon it can still be clearly traced, and John's name and seal are still at the bottom of it, just the same as on the day it was signed.

June 15, 1215 A.D.

6. By signing this Charter, John promised that he would oppress his subjects no more. All men, from the richest noble down to the poorest slave, had a share in this great triumph. The rich man's lands could not be plundered; the church's ornaments and vessels could not be stolen; the trader could not be robbed of his goods, nor the workman of his tools; nor could any one be punished and cast into prison without a fair trial. From this time, Normans and Englishmen began to be more friendly, and love their common country of England; and as years

rolled on, the old unfriendly times were forgotten, and all men were ruled by the same laws, and spoke the same language.

7. But the great men who had drawn up the Charter knew that the faithless king who had signed it could not be trusted to keep his word. So they appointed twenty-five of their number to see that the wise laws which they had written down were properly kept. John soon showed he had no intention of keeping his promise. As soon as his bands of hired soldiers arrived from France, he marched through the country from south to north, burning and plundering without mercy. His wicked life, however, was shortly afterwards brought to a close. In crossing the sands of the Wash with his army, the tide came in so suddenly that all the baggage wagons with the stores and money, and even the crown jewels, were swept away. He took this loss so much to heart, that he was seized with an illness; and a few days afterwards the people of England heard without regret that the tyrant was dead.

un-truth'-ful	**Lang'-ton**	**Wind'-sor**	**bag'-gage**
Ar'-thur	**mead'-ow**	**al-lowed'**	**jew'-els**
op-pressed'	**Run'-ny-mede**	**or'-na-ments**	**seized**

parch'-ment, sheep-skin, which men wrote on in former days.
af-fixed', put on.
Mag'-na Char'-ta, Latin name of the Great Charter.
scroll, writing.

Seal.—The seal was a kind of stamp with letters carved on it. When pressed on wax, it left the mark of the letters. In this way kings, many of whom could not write, used to sign their names to important papers.

LESSON XL.

Earl Simon the Righteous.

HENRY III., 1216-1272 A.D.

1. Henry III. was very young when his father died, so the country was governed in his name by one of the great nobles who had forced John to sign the Charter, and for some years things went on well. When Henry became old enough to rule by himself, however, he soon showed that though he was not so cruel and wicked as his father, he was very weak and foolish, and easily guided by unworthy favourites.

2. The worst of it was that he chose his friends not from among the English, but from his French relations, who came over in great numbers, and had wealth and honours heaped upon them by the foolish king. Just about that time there was a famine in the country, and the poor English peasants were often glad to get horse-flesh and the roots and bark of trees to eat. It seemed very hard that strangers should be well off for everything, while they were almost starving. The barons too were very angry because the king gave all the posts of honour to his favourites, and neglected his own English subjects.

3. It was not long, therefore, before a rising took place against the king. The leader on the people's side was the celebrated *Simon de Montfort*, Earl of Leicester. Earl Simon did not wish to make war against the king, but only to make him keep the laws written down in the Great Charter. Henry did

indeed promise several times to do so; but, like his father, he was faithless, and broke his word. So at last a war broke out, and a great battle was fought at Lewes, in which the king was defeated and taken prisoner, along with his son Prince Edward.

4. Earl Simon then became head of the nation, and ruled in the name of the king. He managed affairs very wisely, and one of his acts has made his name famous ever since. Before his time, the great council of the nation consisted only of bishops, nobles, and knights. He wished, however, to have the advice of those whose arms had helped him in battle. So, when he called his council together to assist him in making laws, he sent not only for the bishops, nobles, and knights, as before, but also for members from each of the cities and boroughs, or as they are now called, *Borough Members*. This was the beginning of our present *House of Commons*.

Beginning of English Parliament, 1265 A.D.

5. Simon did not, however, keep his place as ruler very long. Many of the other barons grew jealous of his great power, and went over to the king's side. Prince Edward also made his escape from prison, and was soon at the head of a large army. Before long, a great battle was fought at Evesham, in which Earl Simon was slain, after fighting bravely against great odds. The common people long remembered their favourite earl, and many years afterwards gave him the name of 'Earl Simon the Righteous.'

right'-eous	**fam'-ine**	**Mont'-fort**	**Com'-mons**
guid'-ed	**neg-lect'-ed**	**Leices'-ter** (*Lester*)	**es-cape'**
re-la'-tions	**cel'-e-brat-ed**	**bor'-oughs**	**Eve'-sham**

LESSON XLI.

A Ballad of Evesham, 1265 A.D.*

Earl Simon on the Abbey tower
In summer sunshine stood,
While helm and lance o'er Greenhill heights
Come glinting through the wood.
'My son!' he cried; 'I know his flag
Amongst a thousand glancing:'
Fond father, no!—'tis Edward stern
In royal strength advancing.

The Prince fell on him like a hawk,
At Al'ster yester-eve,
And flaunts his captured banner now,
And flaunts but to deceive.
—Look round! for Mortimer is by,
And guards the rearward river:
The hour that parted sire and son
Has parted them for ever!

'Young Simon's dead,' he thinks, and looked
Upon his living son:
'Now God have mercy on our souls,
Our bodies are undone.
But Hugh and Henry, ye can fly
Before their bowmen smite us:
They come on well! But 'tis from me
They learned the skill to fight us.'—

* Reprinted from *Visions of England*, by permission of the Author.

'For England's cause, and England's laws,
With you we fight and fall!'—
'Together, then, and die like men,
And heaven will hold us all!'
Then, face to face, and limb to limb,
And sword with sword inwoven,
That stubborn courage of the race
On Evesham field was proven.

O happy hills! O summer sky
Above the valley bent!
Your peacefulness rebukes the rage
Of blood on blood intent!
No thought was then for death or life
Through that long dreadful hour,
While Simon 'mid his faithful few
Stood like an iron tower,

'Gainst which the winds and waves are hurled
In vain, unmoved, four-square;
And round him stormed the raging swords
Of Edward and De Clare:
And round him in the narrow combe
His white-cross comrades rally,
While ghastly gashings cloud the beck,
And crimson all the valley.

And triple sword-thrusts meet his sword,
And thrice the charge he foils,
Though now in threefold flood the foe
Round those devoted boils:
And still the light of England's cause
And England's love was o'er him,
Until he saw his gallant boy
Go down in blood before him.

He hove his huge two-handed blade;
  He cried, 'Tis time to die!'
And smote about him like a flail,
  And cleared a space to lie:
'Thank God!' he said; nor long could life
  From loved and lost divide him:
And night fell o'er De Montfort dead,
  And England wept beside him.

Francis T. Palgrave.

helm, helmet.
glint'-ing, shining, glancing.
flaunts, waves in a showy manner.
peace'-ful-ness, quietness.
in-tent', eager for.
combe, narrow valley.
beck, brook, little stream.
crim'-son, dye red.
foils, beats off.
hove, heaved.

His cap'-tured ban'-ner.—This was the banner taken from Earl Simon's son, whom Edward had defeated. Edward's men flaunted this banner before them, to make their opponents believe that it was the army of young Montfort coming up.

LESSON. XLII.

The Conquest of Wales, 1277–1282 A.D.

EDWARD I., 1272–1307 A.D.

1. Edward I. was a very different king from either his father or grandfather. He was brave and wise, and loved to see peace and order in his kingdom, and under his able rule, things soon became settled once more. He then had time to turn his attention to other matters. He was not satisfied with being king of England alone, but wished to extend his rule over Wales and Scotland as well, and thus form the whole island of Great Britain into one powerful kingdom. This was a very wise and statesman-like

scheme; but in trying to carry it out, he was guilty of much sternness, and even cruelty; so that while we admire his great ability, we are forced to condemn many of his actions.

2. The Welsh were the descendants of the ancient Britons who were driven westward by the Anglo-Saxon invasions; and they still thought that they had more right to the whole country than either Normans or Englishmen. There was a prophecy among them which said that the day would come when a Welsh prince would be crowned in London.

3. In the times both of the Normans and the old English kings, the Welsh were continually giving trouble by sallying forth from their native hills, whenever they saw a favourable chance, and plundering and laying waste the western counties of England. This border district received the name of the 'Welsh Marches;' and the Normans built several castles in it, and appointed a high officer, with the title of 'Lord of the Marches,' to defend it against the inroads of the Welsh.

4. Several of the Norman kings formed plans for conquering Wales; but on their approach, the Welsh fled to their mountains, whither the heavily-armed Normans could not follow them. Edward I., however, was one of those men who are born to overcome difficulties. He brought over from the south of France a body of men who dwelt among the high mountains there, and who were better climbers than the Welsh themselves. With these troops, Edward hunted the Welsh from crag to crag, and from mountain to mountain, till he had quite subdued the

country. The chief prince of Wales had been slain in battle. His head was cut off, and sent to Edward, who had it crowned in mockery with a wreath of leaves, and stuck upon the gate of the Tower of London. It was thus that the old Welsh prophecy was at length fulfilled.

5. There is a story that Edward, to please the Welsh, promised they should have a prince set over them who had been born in their own country, and who *could not speak a word of English.* When he was required to carry out his promise, he brought forth his own little son, Edward of Carnarvon, who had just been born in their country, and who certainly could not speak a word of English, nor of any other tongue. Whatever truth there may be in the story, it is certain that ever since that time the eldest son of the king or queen of England has always received the title of '*Prince of Wales.*'

at-ten'-tion	**an'-cient**	**ti'-tle**	**ful-filled'**
scheme	**con-tin'-u-al-ly**	**mock'-er-y**	**re-quired'**
con-demn'	**fa'-vour-a-ble**	**wreath**	**Car-nar'-von**

states'-man-like, like one who has to rule a state or nation, far-seeing.

pro'-phe-cy, a telling beforehand of what is to happen.

sal'-ly-ing, rushing.

LESSON XLIII.

Wars with Scotland, 1296–1307 A.D.

EDWARD I., 1272–1307 A.D.

1. Edward, having conquered Wales, was not long in turning his arms against Scotland. But there a

much more difficult task awaited him The people of this northern land had ever been distinguished by their love of freedom, and a spirit that would never acknowledge itself beaten. A great portion of Edward's reign was spent in trying to reduce them to subjection. At first he seemed to succeed. He overran the country, and put garrisons in the chief fortresses. He carried away to England the sacred stone on which the kings of Scotland were crowned, and which is still under the seat of the English coronation chair in Westminster Abbey.

English Coronation Chair.

2. But, as soon as Edward's back was turned, the Scotch rose again with fresh spirit and determination. Their leader in this struggle was the renowned *Sir William Wallace.* He was neither a prince nor a nobleman, but only a private gentleman; but he was in every way qualified to be the champion of his country. He was tall, strong, and handsome; as brave as a lion; and he had a spirit that would never yield to a conqueror. He soon gathered around him a band of brave followers, and distinguished himself by many daring attacks upon the English garrisons. At last he collected an army strong enough to fight a great

Battle of Stirling Bridge, 1297 A.D.

battle with one of Edward's generals, in which the English were completely defeated.

3. This victory set Scotland free for a time, and Wallace, the people's hero, became Guardian of the country. It was not for long, however. When Edward, who had been in France during these events, heard what had happened, he was very angry, and marched northwards with a large army, to punish the Scots. Wallace's force was much smaller, and he was besides shamefully deserted by many of the Scottish nobles, who were jealous of his power. In a great battle which took place, therefore, Wallace suffered a defeat, and his army was either scattered or destroyed, and once more the country was forced to submit.

Battle of Falkirk, 1298 A.D.

4. Wallace made his escape, and rather than yield to Edward, lived for seven years the life of an outlaw amongst his native hills. At the end of that time, however, he was basely delivered up to the English by a false friend; and being sent to London, the brave patriot was tried as a traitor, and condemned to a cruel death.

5. Wallace's brave example had not been lost upon his countrymen. His place as leader was speedily taken by *Robert Bruce*, who shortly afterwards was crowned king of Scotland. When Edward heard of it, he was so enraged that he marched northwards once more, threatening to inflict so terrible a punishment upon the Scots, that they would never rebel again. His threats, however, came to nothing. He was old and feeble, and died before reaching the

Scottish Borders, leaving it as his last command to his son, *never to rest till Scotland was subdued.*

a-wait'-ed	**Wal'-lace**	**Guar'-di-an**	**speed'-i-ly**
ac-know'-ledge	**gen'-tle-man**	**shame'-ful-ly**	**Bruce**
sub-jec'-tion	**cham'-pi-on**	**scat'-tered**	**in-flict'**
de-ter-mi-na'-tion	**gen'-er-als**	**de-stroyed'**	**Scot'-tish**

gar'-ri-son, men put into a fortified place to defend it.
qual'-i-fied, fitted.
pa'-tri-ot, a lover of his country.
trai'-tor, one who is false to his king and country.

LESSON XLIV.

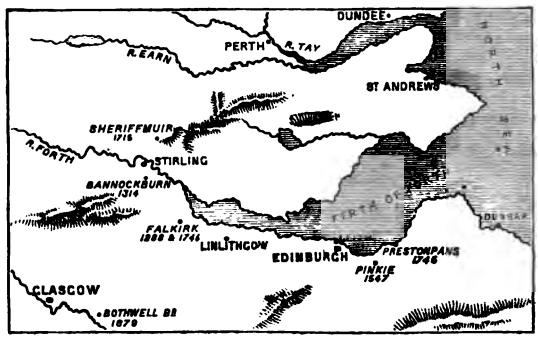
The Battle of Bannockburn, 1314 A.D.

EDWARD II., 1307–1327 A.D.

1. Edward II. did not carry out his father's dying command, never to rest till Scotland was subdued. He had a favourite, of whom he was very fond; and he liked better to spend his time with him, in the pursuit of pleasure, than to engage in the warlike schemes of his father. Thus several years passed away, and Robert Bruce had won back nearly all the towns and castles which had been taken by the great Edward I. with so much trouble.

2. Then, when it was too late, Edward prepared to invade Scotland. He got together a more numerous army than had ever entered that country, even in his father's time. He thought the very sight of so great a host would strike terror into the hearts of the Scots, and make them submit to him without fighting. He was greatly mistaken, however. Bruce, who was a skilful general, was quite prepared. His force, indeed, was not half so numerous as Edward's;

but what he wanted in numbers, he made up in skill. He posted his army in a very strong position, near to a burn or stream called the Bannock, not far from



Stirling. Knowing that the English were very strong in cavalry, he cunningly dug deep pits in front of his own army, and covered them over with brushwood, so that the English knights might tumble in when they galloped to the attack. He also went among his men, and made a stirring speech to them, telling them that the day was come which was to decide whether they were to be slaves or freemen, and calling upon them either to conquer or die.

3. Soon the English host was seen advancing, their banners flying, and their splendid armour flashing in the rays of the sun. Bruce, mounted only on a palfrey, was in front of his army, watching their movements, when an English knight, wishing to distinguish himself, rode at full speed towards him, intending to run him through with his lance. But Bruce, causing his palfrey to spring on one side just

at the right moment, dealt him so terrible a blow with his battle-axe as he was passing, that he dropped dead upon the plain.

4. Next day, the battle took place. The English nobles and knights advanced to the attack, which the Scots met with levelled spears. A terrible struggle took place, made much more difficult for the English by the concealed pits, into which they tumbled pell-mell. In the meantime, the English archers discharged a cloud of their deadly arrows, and it might have fared ill with Scotland, had Bruce not sent a body of cavalry, which slew them or drove them away. Before long, all was confusion in Edward's host. Just at that moment, a crowd of peasants, waving flags, made their appearance on a neighbouring hill. The English, thinking it was a fresh army of Scots, were seized with a panic, and broke into a disgraceful flight, pursued by the victorious Scots. Edward himself rode for nearly sixty miles before stopping. By this great victory, the freedom of Scotland was secured.

5. Several years afterwards, the English were grown so weary of Edward's weak and foolish conduct, that they took away his crown and gave it to his son. The unhappy king was confined in a strong castle, and shortly afterwards was put to death by his keepers in the most cruel manner.

Ban'-nock-burn	**cun'-ning-ly**	**ar'-mour**	**con-cealed'**
po-si'-tion	**gal'-loped**	**move'-ments**	**ap-pear'-ance**
cav'-al-ry	**de-cide'**	**pell'-mell'**	**con-fined'**

brush'-wood, rough, close bushes.
pal'-frey, a small horse.
pan'-ic, sudden fear.
se-cured', made sure of.

LESSON XLV.

Summary.

First Invasion of Julius Cæsar.....B.C. 55
Roman Conquest of Britain begins .....A.D. 43
Defeat of Caractacus 51
Death of Boadicea.....61
Agricola is governor of Britain.....78
Hadrian's Wall is built.....121
The **Romans leave** Britain.....410
Landing of **Hengest** and **Horsa**.....449
Coming of Augustine 597
Death of Bede.....735
First landing of **Danes** in England.....787
England for the first time **united** under **Egbert**..... 827
The Danes conquer Northumbria.....867
Peace of Wedmore.....878
Death of Alfred.....901
Battle of Brunanburh 937
Canute becomes king of England.....1016
Battle of **Hastings**.....1066
Death of William the Conqueror.....1087
First Crusade begins.....1096
Reign of Henry I.....1100–1135
Reign of Henry II.....1154–1189
Granting of Magna Charta.....1215
First Parliament called by Montfort.....1265
Conquest of Wales.....1282
Edward I. overruns Scotland.....1296
Battle of Bannockburn 1314
Death of Edward II.....1327

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